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Seven softpedal at Tokyo summit



Provided all seven countries at the Tokyo summit show good will, their declarations of intent could yet lead to an international energy strategy.

But it will take only one country that does not toe the line to make the entire laborious compromise come a cropper.

And if agreement on a joint strategy is not reached, the world will soon plunge into an economic and social crisis of bumper proportions.

At Tokyo the seven leading Western industrialised countries tried to take their first hesitant steps in the direction of *a common energy strategy.*

Yet no-one expected the summit, attended by the US, Canadian, Japanese, West German, British, French and Italian leaders, to work wonders.

The agreements they reached do not constitute an internationally binding treaty; they are merely declarations of intent that will go no further than the seven leaders can sell them back home.

Even within these narrow bounds the outcome of the Tokyo summit is none too spectacular. It is a mirror image of a world of interests in which ploys and tough guy methods are used to gain advantage.

An international energy strategy only makes sense provided it ensures three factors: greater moderation in oil consumption, further economic growth based on alternative energy sources (including, for a time, nuclear power) and guaranteed supplies of essential energy to the developing countries.

At Tokyo the seven leaders chose to softpedal even on the first target, although they all arrived in the Japanese capital committed to cut oil consumption.

They have known since 1973 that the Opec countries plan to market available reserves in quantities and at prices that suit their own plans, not the consumers' needs.

Four of the seven summit countries (West Germany, France, Italy and Japan) *have no oil of their own, so for them* consumption more or less automatically means importing crude oil.

By the same token, saving oil means, for them, a cutback in oil imports. This formed the basis of a decision reached by the Nine at the 21 June EEC summit in Strasbourg.

Their declared intention is to freeze Common Market oil imports between 1980 and 1985 at last year's level (or even below). They conveniently ignored the fact that one of their number, Britain, is itself a North Sea oil producer.

The Americans immediately saw through the subterfuge. Even if the Nine's oil imports do not exceed 1978 levels consumption may still increase because British North Sea oil does not count as an import.

Japan, an oil have-not and as such a potential ally of the European oil have-nots, was driven into America's arms by *this EEC bid to gain an unfair advantage.*

The four Common Market countries proved unable to withstand their joint pressure. They made concessions. The Americans insisted, and insisted successfully, that oil imports for each EEC country individually (rather than for the Nine as a whole) are to be frozen at last year's level.

Thus Britain's North Sea oil, when sold to West Germany or other Common Market countries, will count as an import.

America also insisted on its own *1977* imports (higher than the *1978* figure) being taken as the ceiling for oil imports between 1980 and 1985.

The US concession consisted of even agreeing to commit Washington to a specific import level so many years in advance. Canada and Japan then followed suit.

Yet while the United States, Canada and Japan were not committed to stay below their agreed ceiling in each and every year of the six-year period, the Common Market countries were.

By the terms of the Strasbourg decision the Nine were committed not to exceed the 1978 limit in any of the six years between 1980 and 1985.

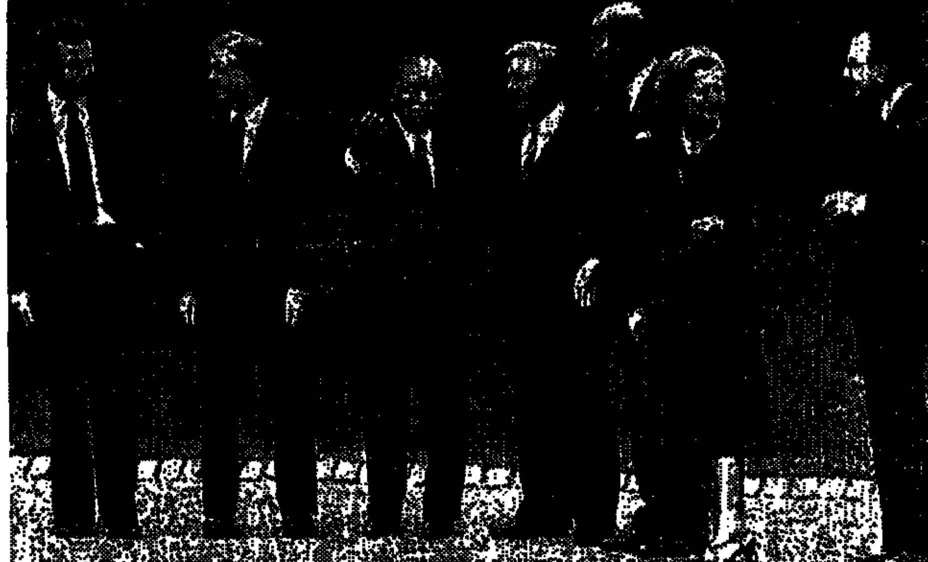
To allow them and the Japanese a certain leeway the seven agreed to a number of special provisions permitting them all to exceed the agreed limits in exceptional circumstances.

The success of the Tokyo summit will be measured in terms of the use made of these escape clauses.

Since oil markets are to be made more transparent for governments by means of a worldwide index, guilty *parties should be identifiable.*

But as no sanctions are to be imposed on them the commercial clinch over how the available oil is to be shared out will continue unabated.

Rudolf Herlt
(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 30 June 1979)



Canadian Premier Joe Clark, US President Jimmy Carter, Japanese Premier Masayoshi Ohira, Bonn Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, British Premier Margaret Thatcher and Italian Premier Giulio Andreotti after their first round of talks at the Tokyo summit.

IN THIS ISSUE

Oil prices up again at Geneva

Opec just about managed to avert ignominy at its Geneva conference, reaching a last-gasp agreement that seems likely to ensure even greater uncertainty as to oil prices.

By the terms of an agreement that may, given good will, be termed a compromise each Opec member-state is, in effect, to be entitled to demand any price it deems appropriate.

The once so powerful energy cartel is now reduced to any price the market will take — within a fairly wide margin.

The complex price structure agreement provides for a minimum price of $18 per barrel that Saudi Arabia alone seems likely to ask.

Iran plans to charge about $22, while Libya, Algeria and Nigeria would like to boost prices to $23.50. The remaining Opec countries are to work on a basis of $20.

$18 is an increase of 24 per cent on the current price basis of $14.55, $23.50 an increase of more than sixty per cent, although this is unrealistic inasmuch as the old price basis has long been in abeyance.

Price differences are due in part to differences in quality of the crude oil on offer, but the negotiation tactics of the various Opec delegations at Geneva were determined first and foremost by political viewpoints and degree of economic common sense.

Saudi Arabia, for instance, has long been known to try and exercise an influence for moderation on its Opec partners. Riyadh is evidently most vividly aware of the extent of interdependence.

Present and future prosperity in the oil-producing countries is realised by Saudi Arabia to depend on a flourishing world economy that must feel sure of its oil supplies.

It is hard to predict the extent to which Opec's Geneva summit will affect the market for finished products. In practice the price increases for crude oil will undoubtedly be lower than the percentages would appear to indicate.

But with each successive round of oil price increases the market seems increasingly prepared to pay more for the coveted commodity.

In the past the mere threat of Opec price increases would have led to repercussions in prices charged for finished products.

In recent months, on the other hand, even *this threat has no longer been needed.* Prices have been largely influenced by spot ratings, which are up to fifty-per-cent higher than contract terms.

Yet even contract rates have recently amounted to between $18 and $22 per barrel.

A somewhat fatalistic mood has lately spread in the industrialised countries. The motto would seem to be: sooner expensive oil than not enough.

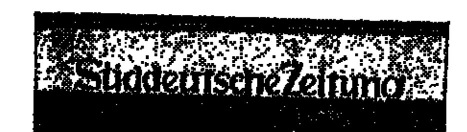
West Germany is a country best able to afford this viewpoint, but even in Bonn dearer heating oil bills will have consequences that are already making *their presence felt in cost and price* indices.

From there it is but a short step to the annual round of wage talks.

Horst Uhlmann
(Süddeutsche Zeitung, 29 June 1979)

■ WORLD AFFAIRS

Schmidt and Soviet leaders meet at Moscow airport for stopover talks



"We did our best," Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko growled cordially at Vnukovo airport, Moscow, where he and Premier Kosygin had met Bonn Chancellor Schmidt and party for three-and-a-half hours of talks.

The Chancellor had just thanked his hosts for allowing the Luftwaffe jet to refuel en route to the Western economic summit in Tokyo.

The Kremlin had readily agreed, making use of the opportunity to hold frank political talks while the Chancellor's aircraft was being refuelled.

The talks dealt less with the Tokyo summit than with inclusion of the Bundeswehr in the Vienna MBFR troop cut talks. Moscow is not alone in realising that summit meetings of the Tokyo kind are neither intended to nor capable of changing the course of world affairs.

The Kremlin nonetheless observed the progress of the summit with interest, as an onlooker and from a position of relative strength.

The Soviet Union has enormous reserves of oil and raw materials that make it virtually independent, or would do so were it not for Soviet commitments to supply its Comecon allies.

They, or so one is told, are forcibly reminded of the prices quoted on spot markets in the West, where a certain amount of the rogue oil traded at such hair-raising prices comes from the Soviet Union.

Did Mr Kosygin (who incidentally made a surprisingly sprightly and alert impression for a 75-year-old) and Mr Gromyko (whose Cabinet responsibility the subject was) really care all that much about progress at the troop cut talks?

Initially they told the old, old story. There could be no progress at Vienna until the US Senate ratified Salt II. Nato and the Warsaw Pact would have to mark time.

Once Salt II is ratified, on the other hand, the Soviet Union seems keen to lose no time in embarking on Salt III talks.

Yet MBFR nonetheless seems to have made headway. The Chancellor is said to have assured the Kremlin that sustained superiority of the SS 20 and Backfire bomber would oblige the West to redress the arms balance.

Experience shows this could easily lead to a fresh arms race, whereas approximate parity has been accepted by both sides as a principle at the MBFR talks, as has that of asymmetrical troop and tank cuts.

The West would even be willing to include a number of nuclear warheads and Pershing rocket launching pads in a package.

But at the forefront of talks a special hurdle, agreement on facts and figures, must first be cleared. Mr Gromyko says Western estimates of East bloc forces are wildly exaggerated.

The West estimates Warsaw Pact troop strength in the MBFR countries at 950,000. Moscow admits to 805,000. Nato has 750.000 men under arms in its sector, and is prepared to prune them to 700,000.

In Moscow Herr Schmidt seems to have tried to build a bridge by suggesting the two sides first define who constitutes a soldier. In Nato many duties are performed by civilian staff that troops carry out in the East bloc.

This proposal may not be the complete answer to the problem, but it does at least hold forth the possibility of clarifying a discrepancy of nearly 160,000 men.

Many other issues as yet unclarified include ancillary measures, air and ground inspection and the Soviet geographical advantage.

A major problem, it was clear in Moscow, is still that of collectivity. The Soviet Union remains unable to forget its German trauma.

After an initial phase of troop cuts by America and Russia, national force reductions are to be undertaken in the two sectors.

In the West this will mainly mean the Federal Republic and Benelux, in the East the GDR, Poland and Czechoslovakia, the eventual aim being to cut troops to about 700,000 on either side.

Moscow keen to negotiate cuts in Bundeswehr manpower

Moscow is keen to negotiate the most substantial cuts in Bundeswehr manpower, the Kremlin evidently holding the West German armed forces in high esteem.

Herr Schmidt's suggestion was that no one country should provide more than fifty per cent of its side's collective forces, which would mean a Bundeswehr cutback to 350,000 men.

But this is still wishful thinking, and the Soviet Union says Salt II ratification must come first. Bonn does not altogether agree.

The Bonn view is that a groundwork could already be laid by eliminating psychological barriers in an arms limitation trade governed by mutual mistrust.

Franz Thoma

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, 27 June 1979)

Nato's Haig: a tribute

At times pundits have toyed with the idea of a non-US general serving as Nato's supreme commander in Europe but no-one has ever seriously made the suggestion.

The US supreme commander at Nato's European headquarters is more than the 'mere symbolic expression of US commitment to defend continental Europe.

He is also a necessary admission of Europe's part that European security cannot yet be ensured without American support.

The Nato C-in-C thus has a dual role. He is not only the commanding officer of all national armed forces committed to a Nato role but also commander-in-chief of US forces in Europe.

If the need arose, his US forces in Europe might also be called on to see active service in North Africa or the Middle East.

A man serving in this capacity must necessarily be a political general, or at least a general with political finesse.

In his one role he owes allegiance to the Pentagon and the US President; in his other he must formulate the views, wishes and requirements of an alliance of independent nations.

This dual role creates tension with which every incumbent so far has had to come to terms.

When General Alexander Haig Jr. was appointed he was viewed with reservations in a number of European countries in view of his promotion over the heads of longer-serving generals and his previous role as White House chief of staff under President Nixon.

Some Europeans found him hard to stomach as a man who had been given the push over to Europe, but this was an error of judgment from the outset.

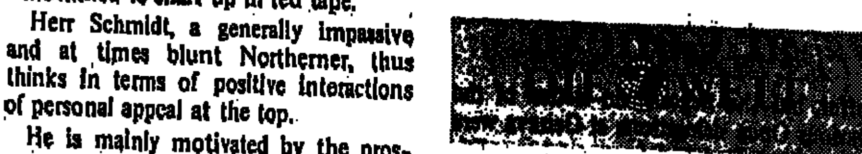
General Haig was a circumspect, tactful and independent guarantor of a functioning White House at a time when Mr Nixon's Presidency was in its dying days.

He went on to show his Nato allies without delay that he was a competent leader and administrator, and at times he has even risked his American role in the Nato interest.

He tendered his resignation before this tension led to open friction. One wonders what political future lies in store for him in the United States. He can certainly lay claim to a creditable past in Europe.

(Der Tagesspiegel, 26 June 1979)

Summiteer Schmidt points out that Bonn is not all-powerful



Bonn Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has a high opinion of summit conferences, especially when they are not smothered in protocol.

He is convinced heads of state and government can settle in straight talks many an issue that would otherwise be condemned to snarl up in red tape.

Herr Schmidt, a generally impassive and at times blunt Northerner, thus thinks in terms of positive interactions of personal appeal at the top.

He is mainly motivated by the prospect of clearing up misunderstandings or preventing them from occurring in the first place.

One such misunderstanding is, in his view, the widespread opinion that West Germany, by virtue of its economic power and political importance, has gained virtual great power status.

He is quick to play down any such claim, saying: "We are just a medium-sized power." This is by no means just false modesty either.

It is a realistic counter to inferences that could prove most unpleasant for Bonn. They aim in two directions:

— First, Bonn is felt to be much too big for its boots already and must have its influence scaled down. This view is held by a number of fellow-members of the Common Market, or at least by sectors of opinion in a number of EEC countries.

— Second, Bonn's growing importance is felt to be beneficial, so much so that others would like to cash in on it too. They call on Bonn to make greater financial sacrifices in, say, development aid.

Bonn may also be expected to take the lead in economic support measures or to step up its military commitments in Nato.

Oddly enough, these two views coincide at times when countries that would prefer to take Bonn down a peg or two try to participate in its economic power.

Bonn itself is none too keen on either approach and objects to being overrated. The Chancellor reckons this is best done in informal talks with other heads of government.

As a rule Herr Schmidt and his Ministers behave constructively at such talks. Bonn is keen to be accommodating, maybe to counteract the impression of great power airs and graces.

At summit meetings he frequently says that one alternative or another does not suit him particularly, but that if the others are agreed, Bonn will not stand in their way.

The outlook behind this approach is that a move which leaves something to be desired is better than none at all.

Helmut Schmidt can feel sure that his knowledge of the facts and powers of persuasion will, in the course of debate and decision-making, ensure due attention is paid to his country's interests.

Bernt Conrad

(Die Welt, 27 June 1979)

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■ PARTY POLITICS

Schmidt, Brandt and Wehner show signs of strain at the SPD helm

Willy Brandt looked straight ahead. Silent and disgruntled, the Social Democratic leader strode through the entrance hall of SPD headquarters in Bonn on the evening of the European election.

He started so fixedly ahead that no one dared get in his way. Later, when he could no longer avoid answering questions, Brandt vented his ire on a television reporter.

He asked the reporter if he, as an employee of a public corporation, did not realise that the election campaign was now over and that such a question was inappropriate.

All the reporter wanted to know was if the subject of the lockout had played an important part in the European election campaign.

Scenes such have as these have been frequent recently. While the CDU and CSU campaign against one another in an unparalleled interview war the attitude in at SPD party headquarters is by no means one of undisguised *Schadenfreude*.

On the contrary, the party leader's gloomy mood seems to be affecting those around him. The European election and the unworthy farce surrounding the election of the President have left deep scars.

Public interest was centred on what was happening within the CDU. No-one realised how hard-hit and demoralised the SPD leadership was after these defeats.

But there is a lot of talk in Bonn about how confused, tired and split the men who have been chosen to lead the SPD in the eighties are.

The Social Democrats are plagued by dark intimations of renewed internecine warfare and a twilight of the gods.

Herbert Wehner was sarcastic when speaking to a meeting of the parliamentary party. "The SPD," he complained," was once a model of organisational cooperation and still is today to some extent."

Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr probably understood the hint. However, for the benefit of those who had not understood, the leader of the parliamentary party went into greater detail.

He added bitterly that the CDU was gradually developing into a solid party with large membership whereas the SPD was changing from a party with large membership into a "a confused group of working parties."

Wehner is very angry with Brandt. He has accused him of no longer leading the party. He is also more firmly convinced than ever that Egon Bahr, whom Helmut Schmidt proposed as party general secretary, was the wrong man for the job.

Wehner's view is that Bahr does not know enough about the party organisation. He has criticised Bahr for no longer holding conferences of works councillors, as was the practice in the past.

More recently, Willy Brandt, who was never especially liked by Herbert Wehner, is not the only one who has the feeling that Uncle Herbert is sawing away at his chair leg.

Even Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, after Wehner's remarks on arms reduction and his constant insistence, is no



longer sure that he has Wehner's unconditional support.

More and more frequently Schmidt makes bitter remarks in inner party circles. Sometimes he doubts whether Wehner really is his old self, if he still has the parliamentary party under control and if much of what is interpreted as strategy is not in reality an expression of lack of overall control.

Wehner insists that he had no wicked arrière pensée when he advised Brandt at a party executive meeting after Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker had refused to stand that he, Willy Brandt, should stand against Karl Carstens for the Presidency.

However, the unanimous view of this proposal was that this "would have got Willy nowhere." Since then, personal relations between the party leaders have deteriorated.

Brandt is embittered that Wehner, who believed Walter Scheel would stand again last month, has directed the wave of criticism towards him.

The legendary troika of Wehner, Brandt and Schmidt is beginning to fall apart from within and men such as Horst Ehmke are already beginning to move away, to avoid being buried beneath the ruins.

Many in the party leadership believe Wehner will not retire until Brandt has left the scene. They know that Brandt, too, can be very obstinate and will not do Wehner this favour.

Nonetheless very few party insiders would now put money on Brandt standing for the leadership again next December. Brandt is accused of having lost control by both the left and the right. Egon Franke, boss of the "tunnel-diggers," as the party rank-and-file are dubbed, and of the still active "friends of a solid state of affairs," has demanded a rethink. He recently said that the SPD should stop all this discussion: "We no longer have time to discuss everything, and I mean everything, with them, even when they are not asked." This was directed against the left, but really aimed at Brandt. Herr Franke whipped up the mood thus: "I ask you to commit yourselves and get down to work, whatever the wiseguys and clever dicks may say." This is not exactly integration policy such as Brandt forced through — against the opposition of Social Democrats such as Egon Franke — when he invited the APO generation to join the SPD, as he has done with the "ecologists" who today are finding increasing support among young people.



Helmut Schmidt, Willy Brandt and Herbert Wehner. (Photo: Marianne von der Lancken)

Willy Brandt gives the impression *that he is tired of day-to-day politics and* is only interested in "general directions."

He is working keenly on the North-South commission's declaration, which is planned for the autumn but he does not, in the view of many in the party and the parliamentary party, attempt to influence present discussion on energy-saving, atomic power or speed-limits.

He always seems annoyed when people ask him about these things and takes less and less advice from his friends.

Those especially who do not agree with Helmut Schmidt's policy of crisis management and hope for new perspectives from Brandt wonder anxiously what will become of the SPD without Brandt.

The more Brandt withdraws from day-to-day politics and Herbert Wehner's influence wanes, the stronger Helmut Schmidt's position becomes and the more the SPD becomes a Chancellor's party.

This has led to increased activity on the left. "I would like to do everything to prevent us becoming a 'Chancellor's club' like the CDU in the fifties", says Henning Scherf, Bremen's Finance Minister, whom Schmidt, regards as the future spokesman of the left wing.

Scherf says: "At the moment we can see that the left within the party is preparing for the party conference at the end of the year, taking up definite positions and calling for a new debate."

Helmut Schmidt, too, is taking up positions. He knows who he wants to replace Hans Koschnick as deputy party leader.

At first he agreed to Anke Fuchs, secretary of state at the Labour Ministry, joining the party leadership. But now he says he needs her for the pensions reform.

He is now backing his trusty trouble-shooter Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, who also has the support of Willy Brandt. The left, on the other hand, has suggested the name of Erhard Eppler, whom the Social Democrats cannot simply ignore.

Henning Scherf's critique of Anke Fuchs is even more applicable to Minister of State Wischnewski:

"Cabinet policy os already so powerful in the party that to counter it even partially we have to agree on a candidate for the post of deputy leader — a post not directly in this sphere of influence."

Wehner is keeping an ostentatiously low profile. He wants to demonstrate that the wrangling about the post of deputy leader does not suit him.

This is why he is not attempting to influence the choice of the next general secretary to succeed Egon Bahr after the parliamentary election in 1980.

Schmidt wants to give Volker Hauff, the youngest member of the Cabinet and Minister of Research and Technology, the post and the task of preparing the 1984 election.

Brandt is said to have backed Wolfgang Roth and then to have accepted Schmidt's nominee. This choice is disputed within the party executive.

Hauff is regarded as a government man and Roth as a party man. Both joined the SPD after demonstrating as students on the streets of Berlin against the Vietnam war.

But Roth has since acquired more of a "stable smell" than Hauff — not only because he was leader of the Young Socialists but because as a member of the party executive he has good connections in the party, with the local parties and the trade unions.

Hauff and Roth have inhibitions about standing against one another.

Up to now Willy Brandt has kept Schmidt out of the firing line in the party. Now that Brandt hardly says anything about atomic energy and thus, in the eyes of many of his friends, has released himself from party discipline, a collision between Helmut Schmidt and his party seems inevitable.

The Social Democrats will not be threatened into accepting Cabinet policy as easily as the FDP. The left in the SPD regards atomic energy as the key question, to which its answer is different from that of the Chancellor: namely clear rejection of further plans for atomic power stations.

"The Social Democrats must watch out that they do not let slip the political mandate to take care of this problem," says Henning Scharf.

Brandt is silent and Schmidt no longer sees any reason to take the formation of opinion in his party into account. He always firmly rejects warnings not to let the SPD sink into lethargy and go into the election broken.

Schmidt has said he would be prepared to vote with the CDU in the Bundestag for his atomic energy programme against a minority in the SPD.

Three times he has the threatened to resign: in the plane from America to Bonn, in the party executive and in the Cabinet. Says Schmidt: "If I were Jimmy Carter I would tell the American people: this is the way things are and this is what we're going to do about it. And if you don't like it, you'll have to give me the boot."

Udo Bergdoll

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, 22 June 1979)

■ PEOPLE

Veteran Saar Premier dies just before retirement

Hours after announcing that he was to retire in October Dr Franz Josef Röder, 69, Prime Minister of the Saar, died of a heart attack on 26 June.

He was about to drive to work and would have turned seventy on 22 July. He was the longest-serving state Premier in the country, and one of the best-known after more than twenty years at the helm in Saarbrücken.

In twenty years Christian Democrat Dr Röder undoubtedly made his mark on the Saar. When he assumed office on 30 April 1959 it was still French, at least economically as part of the franc zone.

He really came into his own when, after the referendum that led to the Saar's return to Germany, he succeeded in reconciling advocates and opponents of separatism.

Röder was no separatist, always strictly opposing international status for the Saar and advocating reintegration as part of the Federal Republic, but once he had achieved this goal he faced daunting economic difficulties.

Bonn ploughed seven-figure sums into the border state but it had trouble in adapting to the competition it now faced from coal, iron and steel in the more centrally located Ruhr.

He was responsible to a large extent personally for the Saar's gradual transformation from a single-string economy and diversification into an "industrial area in green countryside."

Franz Josef Röder was born in 1909 in Merzig in the Saar. He took his PhD at Münster in 1932 and worked at German schools overseas from 1937 to 1945.

He embarked on a political career in 1955 when he was elected a CDU member of the Saar state assembly. In 1957 he became a Christian Democrat Bundestag MP and Saar Education Minister.

In 1959, after the death of Egon Reinert, he was elected Prime Minister. In 1970 he served by rota as president of the Bundesrat, or Upper House in Bonn.

At national level he made a name for himself as a mediator in the Bundesrat when the treaties with Poland were being negotiated.

An acquaintance said the reason why he had backed the treaties with Warsaw in the CDU was that he chose to disregard party politics and acknowledge that the Federal government was responsible for foreign policy.

In March 1979 he formed a coalition government with the Free Democrats. Since the last state assembly elections his CDU had been level-pegging with



Franz Josef Röder
(Photo: Sven Simon)

the Opposition Social and Free Democrats at 25 seats each.

He was a father of five and a popular figure who had always aimed at populist appeal and close ties with grass roots sentiment.

Even Opposition leaders have acknowledged his achievements, but last year signs of discontent were apparent. People began to feel he had held on to power for too long.

What upset them more than anything else was probably an alleged comment to the effect that at his age Konrad Adenauer had only just started on his career as Chancellor.

Last November the Saar CDU decided on a successor, leaving it to Dr Röder to set the date for his retirement. But many Christian Democrats still backed the old warhorse.

He was well known and popular, and some fellow-members of the CDU were keen to persuade him not to retire. They felt he ought to stand again in next year's state assembly elections.

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 27 June 1979)

SPD senator tenders resignation

Bremen Social Democrat Hans Stefan Seifriz, senator for construction and public works, was seventeen when he wrote in a Nazi newspaper that Jewish Bolshevism and capitalism must be "totally annihilated."

Before standing for election to the Bundestag in 1961 he made a clean breast to both his party and the Jewish community in Bremen. Both agreed that his unfortunate choice of phrase had merely been the mistake of a misguided youngster.

What makes the situation so different today that he has been asked to tender his resignation as senator? Because as Cabinet Minister he must be beyond reproach.

True enough, hundreds of thousands of young people repeated the Nazi nonsense they were taught forty years ago and no-one would seriously claim that all of them were rotten to the core.

But a man in Seifriz's position cannot claim extenuating circumstances. The highest representatives of the state that took over from the Third Reich must be as pure as the driven snow, one might fairly argue.

It spoils the tenor of the argument to have to admit that there are more pressing reasons for the move. Bremen is to go to the polls on 7 October.

But Seifriz at least resigned promptly, not like others whose errors were committed in the full flower of manhood yet somehow contrived to convince themselves (if no-one else) that they had no choice and thus could afford to continue in office.

In tendering a prompt resignation Hans Stefan Seifriz has done both the SPD and his country a good turn.

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 26 June 1979)

Bonn job for West Berlin CDU leader

Christian Democrat Richard von Weizsäcker, 59, is rated a late starter but a meteoric one on the political scene. His contribution to the guidelines of CDU policy in the seventies has been that of a thinker, a man of fundamentals.

He certainly enjoys a reputation, although after his unsuccessful stand as Opposition candidate for the Presidency against Walter Scheel in 1974 it has been tinged with that of being the eternal loser.

As a Swiss commentator put it, "he is always called, usually chosen, but seldom elected." But on 21 June he was elected: deputy speaker of the Bonn Bundestag.

Yet even this post, which has never been one to give rise to political controversy, did not prove plain sailing. There were 177 noes and 37 abstentions, and largely because he had tried to hedge his bets.

He tried to retain the option of leading the CDU in West Berlin and nearly lost the election as a result (and it would have been his first really embarrassing failure).

As Christian Democratic leader in the West Berlin elections last March he promised to take an active part in local politics, and Opposition leader in West Berlin would certainly have been an active role.

West Berlin has such a shortage of political talent that even his six months of will-he, won't-he commitment in the divided city showed that Herr von Weizsäcker would have done the city a power of good.

But he wanted to hedge his bets and combine leadership in Berlin with deputy speakership in Bonn. This bid for a political impossibility nearly lost him the vote.

Whatever decided him to opt for a well-paid but not unduly influential job in Bonn rather than an undeniably influential task in Berlin, the Bundestag now has a deputy speaker who cuts an impressive political figure.

Heinz Kurtzbach

(Neue Ruhr Zeitung, 22 June 1979)

SPD endorses Düsseldorf Premier Rau

North Rhine-Westphalian Premier Johannes Rau has finally made the grade. He now enjoys the backing of his constituency parties and stands a fair chance of retaining the Premiership in next year's state assembly elections.

Three hundred thousand North Rhine-Westphalian Social Democrats endorsed his policy and style of government at the state party conference in Herne in the Ruhr.

He has been party chairman for two years now and Prime Minister since the retirement of Heinz Kühn. At Herne he was re-elected chairman by 293 out of 307 delegates.

This vote of confidence was given in expectation of Prime Minister Rau delivering the goods in three forthcoming campaigns.

On 30 September local government elections will show whether he can live up to his promise to ensure that North Rhine-Westphalia remains a state where local government is largely controlled by Social Democrats.

On 11 May next year he will, it is hoped, succeed in leading the SPD to victory in the state assembly elections and making the Social Democrats the largest party in the Düsseldorf assembly.

In October 1980 the next general election is due to be held. Johannes Rau will be expected to mobilise SPD support in North Rhine-Westphalia and help ensure that Helmut Schmidt is re-elected Chancellor.

At present the prospects look far from poor. There is no Opposition worth mentioning. The Christian Democrats were left speechless by the success of Herr Rau's showing at the Herne SPD conference.

The Christian Democrats are in trouble and keen to see their party decide once and for all on either Ernst Albrecht or Franz Josef Strauss as Shadow Chancellor.

With election campaigns in the offing they want to know where they stand. Herr Rau says he would like to know too. He has reminded them it was high time they started living up to their role in the parliamentary system.

He is less blunt but not uncritical of his coalition partners, the Free Democrats, who are currently troubled by their perennial problem of losing votes they, as a small party, just cannot afford to lose.

North Rhine-Westphalian FDP leader Horst-Ludwig Riemer lacks the charisma and standing of his predecessor Willi Weyer, and the Free Democrats look like they are going to face leadership trouble at the most inconvenient of times.

So Johannes Rau is careful to say how satisfactory cooperation has been at coalition level and gentle in his criticism, but firm in naming his conditions such as introduction of comprehensive schools all over the state as an "option."

But the Social Democrats are quite happy to continue their coalition with the FDP, which has functioned satisfactorily for the past dozen years or so.

At Herne the SPD clearly decided that nuclear power is no longer taboo although in the Ruhr they are naturally in favour of priority to coal-fired power stations.

But North Rhine-Westphalian Social Democrats have endorsed nuclear power, albeit not without reservations. They, alongside the Free Democrats at their Bremen congress, have given Chancellor Schmidt the go-ahead for his plans to press ahead with nuclear power.

Premier Rau did not entirely forget campaign considerations, however. Before the Herne conference he conferred with the association of environmental pressure groups, the anti-nuclear ecologists.

He is well aware that the SPD, in keeping with the entire spectrum of established political parties, has ground to make good among people who support the ecologists.

Bernd Kleffner

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, 24 June 1979)

■ WAR CRIMES

Four defendants arrested in blockbuster Düsseldorf concentration camp trial

Four defendants in the Düsseldorf Maidanek trial were arrested on 13 June, a spectacular turnabout in a trial that has now lasted three-and-a-half years.

Recently the state prosecutors asked for the acquittal of four of the nine defendants accused of killing hundreds of thousands of people in Maidanek concentration camp.

Them with equal consistency, they requested the arrest of the remaining five defendants on the grounds that there was a danger they might try to escape. The court ordered the arrest of four of the five.

The four defendants arrested are two former SS women facing the most serious charges, Hermine Ryan, 59, and Hildegard Lächert, 58, deputy camp commandant SS Hauptsturmführer Hermann Hackmann and former SS Rottenführer (corporal) Emil Laurich.

Former SS supervisor Hermine Ryan, née Braunsteiner, escaped from Lublin in summer 1944 as the Russians drew near, and by the end of the war she had gone underground in her home town of Vienna.

There she married US soldier Russel Ryan and officially emigrated to New York via Canada. In 1963 she became a US citizen. It was not until 1972/73 that a *New York Times* reporter tracked her down.

In August 1973 Hermine Ryan was extradited from the United States. At the beginning of the trial she constantly and arrogantly proclaimed her innocence but has since become increasingly pessimistic as the weight of incriminating evidence and documents has piled up against her.

Her husband, Russel Ryan, an electrician, gave up his job and came to West Germany with his wife, who rented a flat in Bochum. He found a job with a German firm at first, then lost it and has since been living on social security.

The situation of the Ryans is not at all rosy. The state prosecutor said that bail of 17,000 dollars could no longer be granted. State prosecutor Weber said: "A few thousand dollars do not count when a defendant is facing a life sentence."

Hildegard Lächert, who until now has lived near Heidelberg, stood as a candidate for the extreme right-wing National Europe Action, a fact which played an important part in her arrest.

The possibility that she might be helped to escape by her political friends could not be ruled out now that she was facing a life sentence.

The chances of her being sentenced to life imprisonment have increased recently as highly incriminating evidence has been given against her.

The state prosecutor recalled that witness Alina Rawska-Bot had told the court that SS supervisor Hildegard Lächert, who then had curly blonde hair and was generally regarded as very pretty, rode through the camp on a bay with a camp inmate going on all fours beside her like a dog.

She gave free rein to her "desires." On one occasion she set a dog on a pregnant Jewish woman and the dog ripped open her belly.

The state presecutor said that in the face of such evidence of cruelty there could be little doubt that Frau Lächert would be sentenced to life imprisonment.

The same applies to former deputy commandant and SS Hauptsturmführer Hermann Heckmann from Osnabrück, aged 65. He took out bail of DM50,000 which enabled him to remain free until now.

But witnesses and documents have since incriminated him him far more seriously than at the beginning of the trial three-and-a-half years ago. The length of his probable sentence was the reason he might try to escape.

Hackmann is accused of shooting several Russian prisoners, some of whom were sick, and of ordering the shooting of several hundred children and sick inmates in the woods behind the camp in summer 1942.

State prosecutor Weber said that this accusation also applied to defendant Emil Laurich, who was originally accused of aiding and abetting murder.

The course of the trial had shown that there was a strong suspicion of complicity in his case. He, too, was strongly suspected of having actively taken part in executions of women, children and the sick.

The defence said that there was no danger that their clients would attempt to escape. Hackmann's defence counsel said moreover that the former SS Hauptsturmführer still had sufficient discipline and order in his belly to give himself up immediately to serve his sentence if he should be sentenced. No convicted Nazi criminal had ever decamped.

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 15 June 1979)

Brazil says 'no go' on extradition

Advocates of a statute of limitations only for Nazi crimes seem to have received support from abroad. The decision of the Brazilian Supreme Court not to extradite former concentration camp commandant Wagner was justified with formal legal arguments and shows that the problem of Nazi crimes is seen differently in different countries.

Nonetheless, two aspects ought to be taken into account in the debate in this country on whether or not there should be a statute of limitations.

Those who cite the Brazilian judges in their argument for the statute of limitations disregard the fact that Brazil was not one of this country's direct enemies in the last war.

German troops did not commit war crimes or crimes against humanity in Brazil. So the Brazilians dealt with the Wagner case differently than it could have been dealt with in countries which experienced German occupation.

Then there is the fact, far more important for us Germans, that foreigners have far more right to use formal legal criteria in dealing with suspected Nazi criminals than courts in his country.

The mass murders committed by Wagner were carried out in the name of Germany. Thus we must look at the problem of war crimes and the statute of limitations on them not only from the formal legal point of view.

Yet Germans must also be allowed to criticise the Brazilian decision severely, because the are using used two different yardsticks.

Wagner's former superior, Franz Stangl, was extradited to this country in 1967, after the statute of limitations had come into effect. It is therefore impossible to speak of justice in this case.

Dietrich Ide

(Bremer Nachrichten, 22 June 1979)

Concentration camp doctor fined DM½m

Denazification panels — the term reminds us of an unsuccessful operation, the attempt by the Americans to separate the sheep from the goats, the major criminals from the fellow-travellers and the innocent.

For many of those accused these panels provided a welcome opportunity to avoid realisation of individual guilt, remorse and responsibility.

However, a denazification panel in Berlin has now remedied a disgraceful situation. Concentration camp doctor Aribert Heim, who has been in the underground for the past 17 years, will no longer be able to live from the rent of his Berlin house.

He bought this house at the end of the fifties when he was living, unchallenged and under his real name, in Baden-Baden, where he had a thriving practice.

The documents and evidence given at the trial revealed indescribable horrors: Heim usually murdered his victims by giving them injections in the heart. When the tenants of the house found out about the doctor's crimes last year, they refused to go on paying the rent.

The court imposed a DM510,000 fine in absentia on the accused, who was defended by a lawyer well-known in Nazi trials. Once it has been compulsorily auctioned Heim's house will fetch enough to pay the fine.

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, 24 June 1979)

'Incorrigible' Nazi gaoled for 18 months

Erwin Schönborn, 64, right-wing extremist and leader of the *Kampfbund deutscher Soldaten* was recently sentenced to 18 months imprisonment in Frankfurt for producing leaflets mocking and deriding the victims of the Nazi regime.

Judge Werner Kunisch said: "The defendant is completely incorrigible and is only likely to learn from a prison sentence."

Schönborn, who is proud of having been the first leader of the former Reich Labour Service who had university entrance qualifications, denies that Jews were gassed in concentration camps, especially Auschwitz.

Before the sentence he had spoken for two-and-a-half hours in court, attempting to prove that the witnesses in Nazi trials "perjured themselves non-stop."

As a result one of the prosecution lawyers, Friedrich Karl Kaul from East Berlin, who represented the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime (VVN), several times walked out of the courtroom.

Kaul said the defendant was using the forum of the court to make Nazi propaganda. On legal grounds the court could not interrupt Schönborn.

State prosecutor Klein was much briefer. He called for 27 months imprisonment for Schönborn on the grounds that he had said in his leaflets that anyone who today believed in the gassing of Jews must be an ass, a thickhead or a criminal.

Kaul was more reserved, basing his case on the fact that the defendant had outraged the human dignity of the Jews. The state prosecutor was not completely happy with the sentence because Schönborn was not sentenced for incitement. The prosecution intends to appeal on this.

Some months ago prosecutors also disagreed with a judge who acquitted Schönborn, who had cast doubt on the authenticity of Anne Frank's diaries.

In his judgement the judge said that it was a serious accusation to say that the VVN "prepared" witnesses for Nazi trials.

The judge said that Schönborn's letter to the Mainz carnival organisation suggesting there should be a few men in concentration camp clothes in the carnival procession so that people would have something to laugh at was an insult.

The court also condemned a letter to the director of the Second German TV Channel saying that he and his colleagues were the dregs of humanity because they had broadcast a film on Nazi crimes.

Historian Professor Martin Broszat was one of the expert witnesses in the Schönborn trial, which began on May 3. He confirmed that the Nazis had killed people in concentration camps by gassing.

He estimated the number of Jews killed by Zyklon B gas in Auschwitz at "one million at a conservative estimate." Schönborn's supporters in the court greeted some of Broszat's evidence with laughter.

At the end of his judgment the judge said it was possible that Schönborn really believed what he said. But he should at least have known that he could not with impunity call anyone a thickhead or an idiot in connection with the annihilation of the Jews.

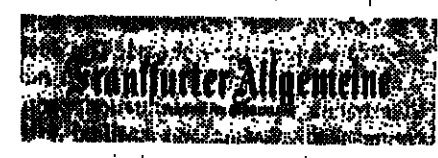
Schönborn, who distributed thousands of leaflets yet claimed he was penniless, seemed unmoved by the sentence. He packed his documents together and left the court with the few men whom he describes as his friends.

Günther Tilliger

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 22 June 1979)

■ COMMON MARKET

EEC human rights prove bone of contention



Citizens of the nine EEC member-states have no satisfactory protection of their basic rights against the EEC as an institution, a fact that has gone unregarded for many years.

Some time ago a vineyard owner in Neustadt in the Palatinate decided to start a new vineyard. An EEC directive prohibited this and the Bonn government had to carry out the directive. The acreage was not to be increased.

The vineyard owner thought this EEC directive prevented him from exercising his rights as a property owner, rights guaranteed in the Federal Republic of Germany's Basic Law.

Conflicts between citizens' basic rights and the actions of the EEC have been increasing since the early seventies. The main areas of conflict are market regulations, competition policy, the Community's cartel policy and the right of citizens of member-states to move and work freely within the Community.

There is no body that could examine the vineyard owner's case against the EEC judicially. The Federal Constitutional Court examines actions that fall under national juridisdiction.

The European Court in Luxembourg, the EEC court, gives its judgments in accordance with the treaties of Rome, which contain no catalogue of the basic rights of the citizens of member-states.

This is a serious gap in the protection of basic rights which will get wider as activities of the Community increase.

There was annoyance in EEC institutions in 1974 when the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe declared itself competent to judge the protection of German citzens' rights in relation to the EEC and thus to measure EEC directives against Basic Law.

For a moment the EEC Commission considered whether this judgment should not be regarded as a breach of Treaty of Rome. A compromise was reached when the presidents of EEC organs jointly declared that they would regard basic rights as formulated in the Council of Europe's human rights convention as binding on the EEC.

The European Court in Luxembourg had at this time already been looking into ways of guaranteeing basic rights.

As the Rome treaties could be of no help, it had to resort to general legal principles as laid down in the national catalogues of human rights of member-states and the Council of Europe's human rights convention, which they had ratified.

Nonetheless the lack of a binding catalogue of human rights is regarded as a serious gap in the EEC constitution.

This is important not only for the protection of the citizen's basic rights against EEC organs in acute cases but also for the EEC's claim that its members:

"wish to preserve the principles of representative democracy, constitutionality, social justice and the regard for human rights as the basic elements of European identity."

This is what the heads of government of the Nine said in their Copenhagen declaration in 1973. It is no coincidence that the tacit precondition for application for membership of the EEC is that the state applying should have joined the Council of Europe and signed its human rights convention.

Demands for an EEC basic rights catalogue will also certainly be made in the European Parliament. Many Euro-MPs want to give the EEC more profile and believe that a catalogue of human rights would show that the Community is more than a club for the stimulation of economic growth.

There is also a party-political colour to the MPs' motives. Socialists in the European Parliament hope to include a few socialist demands in a basic rights catalogue which they could then use as a lever for similar national legislation.

Christian Democrats thought an EEC human rights catalogue would mean progress towards European integration.

Yet the proposal to append a human rights catalogue of the Nine to the Treaty of Rome sounds simpler than it is. Firstly, wrangling can be expected about what this catalogue should contain.

The debate on basic rights in recent years has become more vehement because the concept of basic rights has been inflated.

There are strong tendencies to add a whole series of "social basic rights," claims by the citizens on the state, to the classical rights of the citizen.

This debate would then be fought out on issues such as the protection of property or the fight for the "right to work," to a healthy environment, to education, health and other rights which cannot be enforced by courts.

These new "social rights" would mean the state would have to intervene more and more, instead of keeping in the background. In the debate on the issue, the European Community might not be able to agree on a basic rights catalogue at all.

Secondly, it would not be enough merely to define a catalogue and then have it ratified by the EEC organs and the parliaments of the member-states.

It would also be necessary to establish an individual right of each citizen to bring complaints before the European Court. The EEC would thus become supranational in yet another sphere.

This would suit many Europeans but there would be violent resistance to it in many member-states.

For this and other reasons it would probably be politically easier if the Community abandoned plans for its own catalogue of basic rights and court of basic rights and joined the Strasbourg human rights commission as an institution, just as the nine-member states of the EEC joined the Council of Europe long ago as single states, for the sphere of their national jurisdiction.

Even now the Luxembourg court occasionally has recourse to the human rights convention. If the Community signed the convention it would not need to develop its own courts or its own laws.

If the Community simply took over the contents of the convention without actually signing it, there would be a danger that the same basic rights would be interpreted differently, by the Luxembourg European Court in relation to Community law and by the Strasbourg court for the actions of the national institutions.

These predictable difficulties last year led Professor Golsong, for many years the Council of Europe's leading civil servant on the matters of the human rights convention, to change his original opinion on the matter.

He said the Community should not only adopt the material and legal contents of the Strasbourg convention but should sign the human rights convention as a community.

This proposal too brings difficulties, especially in connection with the representation of the Community on the human rights convention's three institutions (the human rights commission, the committee of ministers and the human rights court).

But the signing by the EEC of the Strasbourg convention would not lead to a futile quarrel about the significance of the move in terms of European integration, because the Council of Europe, unlike the EEC, remains a mere association of states which has no legal powers over its members.

Golsong's proposal has won support in the past months. The European Parliament accepted it at the end of April and called upon the Brussels Council of Ministers to prepare accession to the Strasbourg convention.

The EEC Commission in Brussels also decided in its favour. The Council of Ministers "welcomed" the fact that the question of signing was being considered within the Nine. The Bonn government declared its support.

Other governments reacted more slowly. The British are waiting. Opinion is divided in Ireland and France. Up to now, only the Danes have spoken against it. The Council of Ministers will discuss the matter further in the second half of the year.

Signing the convention would have considerable European significance, even though it cannot be classified under "integration."

Europe is more than the organised Europe of the Nine. The far bigger, but weaker, organisation of the Council of Europe makes possible cooperation with many democratically governed countries who cannot join the Community (the neutral states for example) or do not want to join it at the moment (the Norwegians, the Icelanders, the Maltese).

Yet ties between these countries should be cultivated at every appropriate opportunity. The two associations can complement one another.

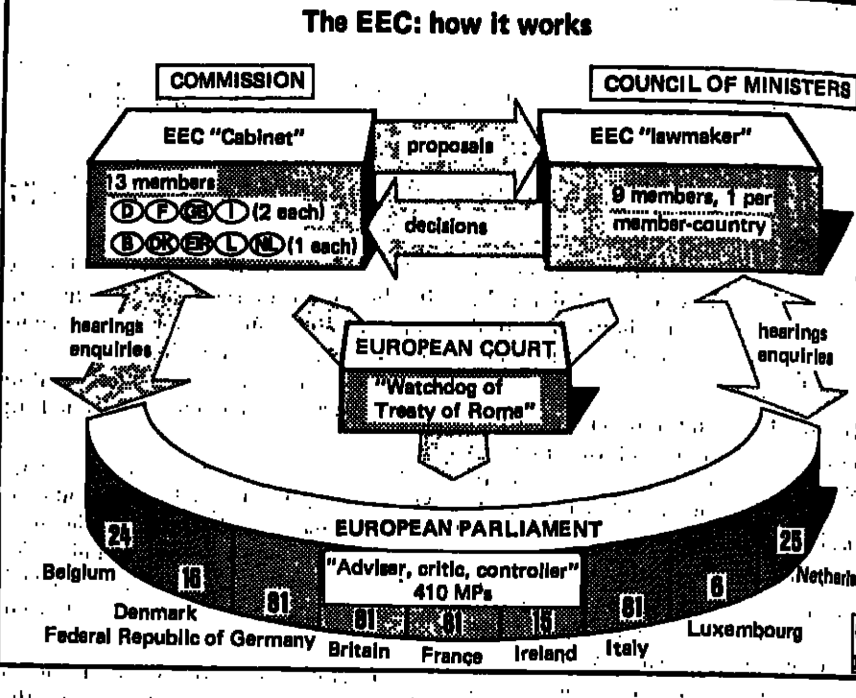
Jealousy, feelings of superiority on the one hand and feelings of inferiority on the other are neither justified nor useful.

The European Community could give the Council of Europe right of way in all matters relating to human rights and their protection by the Council.

This could lead to a division of labour which would benefit both organisations. In the Nine, the gap in human rights legislation could be filled with the help of the Council of Europe. And signing by the EEC would strengthen the Council of Europe's role as guarantor of basic rights.

Günther Gillessen

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 23 June 1979)



EUROPE, Yes or No?

How they rate the Common Market in per cent:

	Denmark	Britain	France	Luxembourg	Ireland	Germany	Belgium	Italy	Holland
GOOD	36	39	59	63	63	63	66	73	83
BAD	25	31	7	14	12	4	3	3	2
DON'T KNOW	39	30	34	23	25	33	31	24	15

TRADE

Exporters sound cheerful as markets recover



Exporters take an optimistic view of short- and medium-term prospects. A group of West German exporters' associations has sounded a confident note.

They base their confidence on international economic recovery, especially in neighbouring European countries, and on the gains of other major currencies against the deutschemark since the beginning of this year.

Industrial expectations of the export trade have taken a distinct turn for the better after having been decidedly gloomy only a few months ago.

A few months ago industry was most upset by the crisis in Iran and by the fresh round of price increases for oil and commodities.

This does not mean, of course, that the risks which so recently gave rise to scepticism and uncertainty have been forgotten. But supplies seem reasonably safe and commodity prices have not gone through the roof.

So businessmen seem to have concluded that the risk of this happening is none too serious in the foreseeable future. Take, for instance, manufacturers of industrial plant, who export 83 per cent of their output.

They are confident of retaining their world leadership this year, especially now economic recovery has spread to major European customers, leading to brisker demand for capital goods.

Since West Germany's product range consists primarily of capital goods and equipment, exporters have already done good business on the strength of the trend.

Recent export orders have intensified an upswing already apparent on the home market. In manufacturing industry March and April export orders were eight-and-a-half per cent up on January and February.

This is a threefold-plus improvement on the upswing in domestic orders, while between January and April export orders were up fifteen per cent on the first four months of 1978, as against eight per cent for domestic orders.

The trend has been set by manufacturers of capital goods and industrial plant, but they have been joined by basic materials and manufacturing industry, especially chemicals and steel.

Electrical engineering is making slow progress, but mechanical engineering, textiles and footwear report brisk business.

Economic recovery in countries that are West Germany's major European trading partners has clearly more than offset the US recession.

Exporters owe their success not only to their customary selling points: quality, reliability, delivery dates, design, service and technological lead.

They are also benefiting from prices and costs increasing faster abroad than at home, with the result that West German exports are growing more competitive.

Exchange rate trends are certainly on the exporter's side again for once. Interest rates are probably the reason why the DM has declined against the dollar by a good four per cent since the beginning of this year.

Against the proverbial trade-weighted basket of currencies the deutschemark has declined by half a per cent in this period.

At the same time domestic prices and costs have increased more slowly than in other countries, so the Bundesbank reckons devaluation has in real terms amounted to between two and three per cent.

If this is true the two- to three-per-cent real revaluation rate last year has been more or less fully offset.

All told, foreign trade has certainly been brisker in the first four months of 1979 than was expected not long ago. In real terms exports are up seven per cent and imports ten, with both figures well above last year's.

Since imports have increased faster than exports the current account trading surplus that proved such an embarrassment in the past has been reduced.

Brisk domestic economic recovery has led to higher imports from which Western industrialised countries have been the main beneficiaries.

They supply more than three quarters of West German imports, but they are also its best customers, accounting for four fifths of exports.

Exports to Italy, Britain, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Spain, Japan, Greece and Saudi Arabia have increased above average in January to April 1979.

Exports to neighbouring Holland have failed to increase quite so fast, while exports to the United States, Norway and the Soviet Union have declined in cash terms.

Within six months Iran has halved imports to DM800m, while overall exports to the oil producers declined from DM7,800m to DM6,100m during the period under review.

As a percentage of overall exports their share thus declined from over eight to just a little over six per cent.

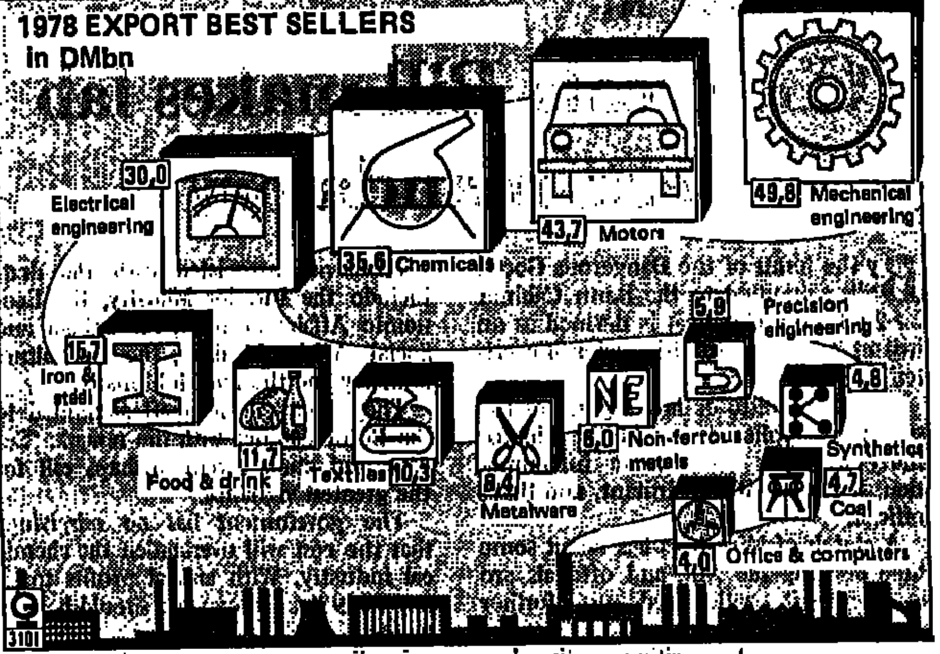
The revolution in Iran has led to a drastic decline in imports from a country that last year was Bonn's major oil supplier.

Imports from Iran have been halved and Iran no longer (temporarily, at least) figures in the list of the top twenty countries from which West Germany imports goods of all kinds.

Oil imports from Saudi Arabia and Nigeria have increased substantially instead, Britain and Norway have also cornered a larger share of the domestic market with North Sea oil.

Lothar Julitz

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 21 June 1979)



Lomé talks nearer agreement

Talks on a renegotiation of the Lomé Convention have been resumed in Brussels with brighter prospects of success than when they were adjourned four weeks ago.

The EEC has offered the 57 African, Caribbean and Pacific developing countries a roughly ten-per-cent improvement on its previous proposals for financial assistance.

Financial assistance had been the bone of contention, Britain and France objecting in particularly strong terms to making a higher contribution from their national budgets than hitherto.

The European Investment Bank has now said it is prepared to make an extra DM715m available in low-interest loans, while a number of items of expenditure, such as sending EEC experts on tour to Third World countries, are to be transferred to the EEC budget.

According to the revised offer the EEC is willing to lend financial assistance totalling roughly DM16,500m over the next five years.

The first Lomé Convention provided for roughly DM8,500m to be shared between 46 countries.

Apart from development aid, delegates had to come to terms on a number of individual issues, such as tobacco, citrus fruit and sisal as Stabex commodities, Stabex being the EEC equivalent of the Common Fund.

Common Market import provisions for a number of farm products also remained to be settled.

Wilhelm Hadler

(Die Welt, 26 June 1979)

Bonn rates well in competition for fuel and power resources

Bonn is by no means as badly off in the competition for oil and other fuel and power resources as we have been led to believe.

Both oil and its alternatives will grow increasingly scarce, but a reassuring conclusion is reached in an Ifo report entitled Problems of the World Economy in the Eighties.

It was compiled by the Munich economic research institute to mark its thirtieth anniversary, and the results have just been published.

The Federal Republic of Germany is not expected to have to take dramatic consequences from the worldwide oil supply situation.

The for the most part free market economy is a distinct advantage. Oil prices are largely governed by supply



and demand but higher prices can be handed on.

Besides, West Germany has ample cash in hand and its constant payments surpluses steadily fill foreign exchange reserves.

Bonn's foreign policy ties should not lead to any serious disadvantage in competition for oil either, although supplies may be tough and go in the late eighties and early nineties.

But West German companies will be investing heavily in prospecting abroad, so dependence on imports should be reduced to 100 million tons of crude oil a year by then.

The Ifo report also concludes that more nuclear power stations will be a must if electric power supplies are to be ensured in the eighties.

A number of suggestions are made with a view to ensuring that energy policy does not come a cropper. Natural gas, for instance, must no longer be converted into electric power; it should be piped straight to the consumer.

Coal can take its place as a power station fuel, while process heat must be put to better use (piped central heating from power stations, for instance).

Road tax and other taxes must be aimed at promoting economy, not consumption.

The report works on the assumption that international economic growth will slow down but not grind to a halt in the eighties. So there is little point in Bonn trying to step up growth with a view to ensuring full employment.

Energy supplies could well put paid to any such hopes. "Energy supplies," the report says, "will limit economic growth."

dpa

(Nordwest Zeitung, 25 June 1979)

■ ENVIRONMENT

Chemicals Bill makes lab tests mandatory

By the terms of the Dangerous Goods Bill submitted to the Bonn Cabinet on 20 June a chemical is defined as an irritant according to strict scientific criteria.

Half a millilitre or half a gram of the substance, applied to a rabbit's skin for thirty minutes, must cause inflammation. *If it does, it's an irritant, and that's* official.

A clutch of Ministries has spent some time drafting the Bill, and officials are confident it will need no further amendment.

It may not make exciting reading, but it establishes clarity on a subject that is increasingly upsetting public opinion, and legal safeguards require clear definitions.

Government officials are also confident the test agencies that will conduct mandatory tests of chemicals new and old will be assigned not 250 but the full 560 manpower quota needed to implement the law.

The chemical industry has bombarded Bonn with objections to the proposed licensing procedure for the past two years, arguing that it would be prohibitively expensive.

Manufacturers will have to invest DM70,000 in laboratory tests of each new product, plus a further DM38,000 in sub-acute tests (meaning tests to check whether it might prove toxic up to 28 days after exposure).

Ministries associated with the draft include the Interior Ministry, the Economic Affairs Ministry, the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry, the Agriculture Ministry and the Health Ministry.

They minuted the draft submitted to the Bonn Cabinet with the remark: "Seveso and other recent mishaps call for the greatest vigilance."

The government has no misgivings that the cost will overburden the chemical industry. With annual profits totalling DM90bn the expense should be negligible.

Leading manufacturers already have lab facilities for safety's sake. Their extra expenditure could well be next to nothing. Besides, only 100 to 250 new chemicals are marketed annually.

The total on the market is 45,000 or so, and they are available in more than a million variations.

Responsibility is assigned firmly to the manufacturer or importer; the buyer seldom has the knowhow to beware. The manufacturer or importer must find out whether a substance is in any way dangerous.

New chemicals must be submitted, along with the results of laboratory tests, to a government licensing agency that will check the claims.

Further checks may be ordered, graduated up to the final sanction, a ban on manufacture.

Dangerous goods as defined by the Bill may cause cancer, damage fruit or change genetic structures. They may also be "otherwise dangerous for man or the environment."

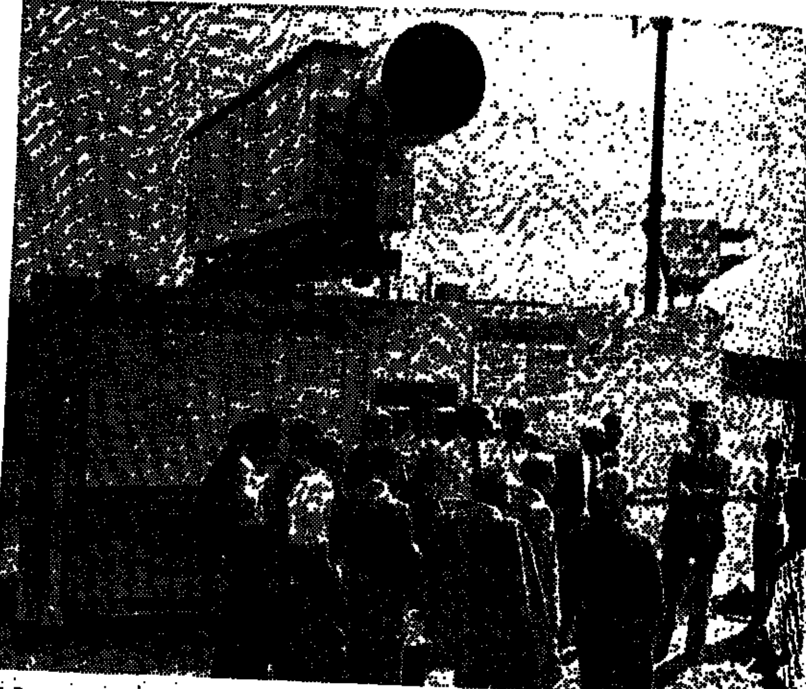
The Bill when passed will be the first uniform countrywide law on poisons. Offenders will be liable to fines and gaol sentences of up to five years.

The chemical industry has now abandoned its campaign against the Bill. A spokesman for the government has an explanation:

"Manufacturers have come to see that if they keep on filibustering they may end up in a situation similar to the one that faces the nuclear power industry."

Eberhard Nitschke

(Die Welt, 20 June 1979)



Hamburg laser gun in clean air project

This laser gun, installed to monitor atmospheric pollution in a Hamburg suburb, was inaugurated by the city's senator for environmental affairs, Wolfgang Curilla, in June. It will maintain a round-the-clock check on harmful substances in the air for a twelve-month trial period at a cost of DM150,000. Senator Curilla proudly announced that this pilot project should enable Hamburg to pinpoint environmental offenders more accurately and reduce pollution levels systematically. The steel container includes a complete meteorological station to measure wind speed, direction, pressure, humidity, rainfall and visibility. The laser gun is trained on Wilhelmsburg, Veddel and Rothenburgsort from a vantage point atop a 35-metre garbage tip.

(Photo: S. von Heydt)

■ MOTORING

Motor manufacturers give R & D the go-ahead

Now oil is in ever shorter supply the motor industry has finally put its research and development divisions to work on new techniques with a vengeance.

This time it is serious. New ideas must be evolved without delay to ensure a future for the motor-car in an era when there will be less and less energy available.

"The next few years will be more productive than the past twenty," says Eberhard von Kuenheim, board chairman of BMW in Munich.

The main considerations will be lower fuel consumption and exhaust levels, less noise, greater safety and a more sparing use of raw materials.

Bonn Research Minister Volker Hauff has invested DM62m this year alone in automotive research. The most striking new feature is that electronics is being introduced in a big way.

Sensor devices indicate when the exhaust fumes overstep the clean air mark. They also supervise electronic fuel mixture and injection.

Ignition reacts electronically to load, torque and temperature. Crash sensors activate airbags on the steering column at the moment of impact. They also tighten safety belts.

Speed-linked distance indicators sound the alarm when the vehicle ahead is too close for comfort. Tyre pressure can also be read from a digital dial on the dashboard.

A particularly neat idea is the dashboard traffic jam indicator, a device that indicates heavy traffic ahead and suggests alternative routes.

The principal changes that can be expected in engine design are better combustion chamber design, better streamlining, higher compression and less friction inside the engine.

Electronically controlled automatic gearboxes with up to eight speeds are no longer just plans on the drawing board either, while bodywork will be reduced in weight and further streamlined.

"Cars in the class we sell will be hybrids," says a spokesman for Volkswagen. "They will use metal in the supporting and energy-consuming parts and plastic in non-supporting parts, plus aluminium in the mechanical parts.

"And maybe, at points where light weight combined with high endurance is important, materials such as fibreglass- or carbon fibre-reinforced plastic will be used."

When motor fuel grows even scarcer engines using a mixture of petrol and alcohol will come into their own. They have already undergone successful trials for years.

Electric traction is a non-starter in the near future, however. Batteries are still too heavy, bulky and too short in the distance they will allow a battery-run car to travel.

"Engineers can really come into their own these days," says Daimler-Benz research director Professor Förster. "They can experiment with virtually everything."

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 23 June 1979)

Bad drivers do their IQ little credit

Driving is a matter of character and depends to some extent on brain volume, says Profesor Herbert Lewrenz of Hamburg.

"Even with very limited intelligence you can still drive a vehicle if you put all your faculties to use," he told the 20 June Hamburg medical congress held by ADAC, the Munich-based motoring organisation.

"But motorists are not usually as stupid as the way they drive might indicate," he added.

It is almost always healthy, normal people who are to blame for traffic risks. Abnormal behaviour is not usually an indication of mental illness.

Drivers with serious psychic handicaps are required to comply with uniform standards; not so motorists with no special peculiarities either physical or mental.

Yet their "egocentric interests" are often more strongly developed than their awareness of the highway code or readiness to accept fair play on the road.

Dangerous, ruthless drivers aim at outwitting others and gaining negligible advantages at inordinate risk while expecting the others to show tolerance.

"People are probably prepared to accept too much in the way of risks," said Professor Lewrenz. "This may be an explanation for the disproportionately high accident figures in the Federal Republic."

He doubted whether knowledge alone was enough. It was irresponsible to speed at the upper limit of fifty kilometres an hour (thirty mph) along a residential side street lined on both sides with parked cars.

Perfectionism is not the answer. We must convert risks experienced and near-miss accidents into learning processes.

"Sportsmanlike" or "sporting" driving is a concept that should be scrapped. It can at best be said to apply to a few dozen professional racing drivers who risk life and limb on the grand prix circuit.

dpa

(Bremer Nachrichten, 23 June 1979)

Car noise cut at source

If Chancellor Schmidt and Finance Minister Matthöfer stick to their guns in arguing that traffic noise must be combatted primarily at source, it will be 1995 before noise levels are reduced to any great extent.

In a Cabinet draft submitted by Transport Minister Kurt Gscheidle it is noted that it takes at least a decade to convert an entire generation of motor vehicles to lower noise standards.

Until 1985 Bonn's hands are tied by an EEC ordinance permitting noise levels of up to eighty decibels in traffic.

The Interior Ministry concludes that it is wrong to assume noise abatement by way of landscaping or the like will be unnecessary providing noise levels at source are reduced.

Interior Minister Gerhart Baum says traffic noise levels cannot be expected to decline perceptibly, by three or five decibels, until 1995, and even then noise abatement measures must be undertaken on busy roads.

But the Chancellor and Finance Minister object to this idea. They feel the noise abatement measures called for by the coalition parties will prove too expensive.

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 19 June 1979)

Car thieves have it made

Last year about 60,000 motor vehicles were stolen in West Germany, and in many cases car-owners made life easy for car thieves by neglecting elementary precautions.

Motorists are often incredibly thoughtless, the CID claim in their July crime prevention report published in Mainz.

One youngster broke into a car to look for something to steal, then discovered a spare ignition key in the glove compartment and decided to go for a joyride.

A woman driver left her car with the key in the ignition to take a breath of fresh air. She breathed even deeper when she returned to find her car missing.

Police advise motorists even to take the ignition key with them when they go to pay their bills at a filling station.

Owners not only run the risk of having their cars stolen. They often have to pay for the damage caused by joyriders.

dpa

(Handelsblatt, 25 June 1979)

Road deaths down at last

This year road deaths are expected to total fewer than 14,000 for the first time in twenty years, ADAC, the Munich-based motoring organisation, forecasts.

It reckons the number of fatalities for 1979 will be 13,700 or so, as against 14,647 last year. The number of injured persons is also expected to decline.

The forecast for 1979 is less than half a million traffic injuries, as against 508,657 cases reported last year.

The trend is surprising, since mileage is expected to increase from 312,000 million kilometres to 319,000m. ADAC attributes it to higher local authority expenditure on pedestrian safety.

Besides, more motorists are using the autobahns, which have the best accident record of all road categories.

(Handelsblatt, 21 June 1979)

Tinted screens impair vision, congress told

Tinted windscreens do not improve safety, doctors say. They impair vision, especially in the dark, Professor Elfriede Aulhorn of Tübingen told a medical congress in Hamburg on 22 June.

The congress was sponsored by ADAC, the Munich-based motoring organisation.

Professor Aulhorn was scathing in her criticism of drivers who wear sunglasses to avoid being blinded by oncoming headlights at night.

They merely heighten the accident risk, and as for tinted windscreens, they can only be deemed satisfactory from the medical viewpoint if they are only partly tinted.

The driver must be able to see clearly in his immediate field of vision, as the motor industry knew only too well.

But manufacturers argue that tinted windscreens are what car-buyers want, so doctors could only appeal to motorists no longer to ask for fully-tinted windscreens.

Frau Aulhorn is a specialist who has made many a court appearance in accident cases. She also criticised iodine headlights.

While admitting that their users could see more, she said that oncoming drivers were often blinded so severely that the advantages were offset by the drawbacks.

Besides, iodine headlights were often poorly fixed to the bumpers. They are not firmly fixed, soon swivel and before long blind other road-users.

Poor general vision, inadequate dawn-dusk vision and oversensitivity to flashing headlights are the cause of many accidents, the congress agreed.

Professor Heinrich Harms of Tübingen said deteriorating vision was particularly dangerous because it was usually unsuspected in the early stages.

Regular sight checks were thus a wise precaution, and doctors could make a valuable contribution to road safety by carrying them out.

Infection of all kinds is a traffic risk, the congress claimed, and doctors were particularly anxious to stress this point with both fellow-doctors and motorists.

Few people realised that many complaints were accompanied by unstable moods and circulation that clearly impaired driving ability.

Reinhard Biehl

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 23 June 1979)

OBITUARY

Ernst Meister, major poet but never bestseller

Ernst Meister, undoubtedly one of this country's major post-lyric poets since the war, has died in Hagen aged sixty-seven. He was never a member of the literary scene, his volumes of poems were never best-sellers.

The award of the most prestigious German literary prize would probably not have changed this; Ernst Meister was due to be presented with the Büchner Prize this October.

He was still alive when the news that he had been awarded the prize was announced. It was the major success of his literary career. Shortly afterwards he died of a heart attack at his home in Westphalia.

The fact that this inveterate loner has remained as good as unknown to a wider reading public and will probably continue to remain so was, finally, his own decision. His poems are enigmas.

Of course Hölderlin and the late Paul Celan, both poets Meister greatly admired, wrote dark, ocular poems. Nonetheless they were read, interpreted and honoured more and more even by those who did not understand them.

The almost seductive musicality, the sensuousness and rhythm of their poems held even inveterate rationalists spellbound.

Meister's work does not have this sensuous aspect. Or rather it is more difficult to grasp in his work. Meister is a philosophical lyricist, not an Orphic poet like Hölderlin or Celan.

He is a poet who thinks thinking, who questions the ego and the totality of being, rather than involving it hymnically.

The peculiar heaviness of tone, the lack of dance-like rhythm, the compactness, solidity and proud spareness of language are all appropriate to the reflective bent of the author and certainly they have their poetic appeal. They are also typically Westphalian.

Ernst Meister was born in Haspe, near Hagen, in 1911. He studied theology, philosophy and German literature at university and for twenty years worked as a sales manager in his father's factory.

Since 1961 he had been a free lance writer. In all this time, he never left his Westphalian homeland, apart from a few journeys abroad and his time as a soldier in Italy.

And this was also a decision for a certain intellectual attitude: "Poem and thought, deep reflection, hard work" — hardly a romantically graceful concept.

Yet Meister's poetry is based on a lyrical tradition whose first major proponents wrote in a Romance language. It is the tradition of the "hermetic" — i.e. mysterious, not immediately accessible — poem such as those written in the nineteenth century by Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé.

This lyric poetry no longer attempts to symbolise the whole or the general in the object regarded. Here, in the contemplation of empty, godless space all sense connections are shattered; and from the pieces this lyricism builds the poem and the world which exists as poem.

The consciously created, magical semi-darkness finally becomes a poetic occultism which is at the same time a substitute for religion intended to shock so-called sound common sense.

Without existence in toto, writing poetry has no rhyme or reason," says Meister in an autobiographical note of 1971. "Say of the whole the sentence, the fraction, the parted cry, the dull tone, the light of day."

Thus opens the title poem in one of his most impressive volumes which appeared in 1972 (in all he published twenty collections of poems starting in 1932):

The whole is like the sun: if you look direct at its light, you see nothing, you do not experience "the sunset of the eyes in the blinding light of truth."

This truth, however, is as untrue as all that is clear-cut because it says nothing of pain, shadow, darkness, and the riddle of death — the subject of many of Meister's poems: "Death is not moon to the dead man."

The poet, who speaks of the totality of existence, who therefore goes all the way linguistically, must avoid spotlights and slogans, must transcend all fixities.

Those who give themselves up fully to Meister's poetry find themselves in a strange state of suspension. Language states something and then cancels it out, it abstracts from the specific only to return to the specific at the end.

The volume entitled *Die Formel und die Stätte* (The Formula and the Place) expresses this process almost programmatically in one text:

"From the tip/Of the thorn/the formula harvested./That which was light/Becomes heavy in the hand/Slips from it./And it puts down roots./Becomes a rose/In this place."

A philosophical poem: the formula for life and death, for the whole, often seems within our grasp; but when we reach for it it disappears again in the only thing that can be grasped, in the detail, the rose for example.

Mathias Schreiber

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 18 June 1979)

Ernst Meister

(Photo: Brigitte Friedri

Emigré scholar dies in Washington

Helmut Hatzfeld, one of the great German Romance scholars of his generation, died in Washington on 18 May. He had strong ties with Munich where he studied and took his PhD in 1915 under Karl Vossler.

He then taught at Frankfurt University before being appointed to a professorship in Heidelberg, which he was deprived of in 1935. Hitler's Germany forced him to emigrate.

Hatzfeld went to Belgium and then to the USA. From 1940 until he his retirement he taught at the Catholic University of America in Washington. After the war he held a number of guest professorships in Germany.

Hatzfeld began his academic career with linguistic research; in 1928, for example, he published "Guidelines to Comparative Semantics."

From linguistics, and particularly under the influence of "idealistic new philology" represented by Karl Vossler, Hatzfeld soon became interested in a stylistic and comparative approach to literature.

This became his major interest from then on. His Don Quixote as a Work of Verbal Art, like his later Trends and Styles in Twentieth-Century French Literature, was one of two prize-winning critical works.

The unmistakable move from analytical research into detail to synthetic interpretation on aesthetic principles led Hatzfeld almost inevitably to questions of the style which characterised literary epochs.

His analyses of the Baroque and the Rococo periods, which have relevance far beyond the field of Romance studies, are particularly important, especially because of the discussion and clarification of key concepts.

Hatzfeld critically and fruitfully developed the Comparative Art postulate of Wölfflin and Walzel in the widest sense of the word in his book Literature through Art.

He was not only an expert on several literatures from their beginnings to the present day but also a universal scholar.

All who knew him personally know that he was not only a leading scholar but also an unusually stimulating, tolerant and helpful man.

Alfred Noyer-Weidner

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, 19 June 1979)

Africa south of the Sahara stars in West Berlin

Every two years the Berlin Festival is to put on an event entitled Horizons devoted exclusively to the cultures of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

This years Horizons will be held from 22 June to 15 July and 800 people will take part. The emphasis will be on the culture of African countries south of the Sahara.

More than a dozen African countries are represented, including South Africa and Uganda. However, Angola, Mozambique Namibia and Rhodesia are not represented.

Although the Horizons programme talks of world cultures, the organisers have allowed a very wide definition of the concept of culture, including popular and trivial culture.

The three-week programme will present traditional and contemporary theatre, traditional music under the motto Black Africa 1979; bards, singers, storytellers, highlife music and city folklore will be presented, as will traditional and contemporary visual arts, feature and documentary films.

Together with the Bethanien Artists' House, Horizons 1979 is also presenting the Berlin International Literature Festival from 24 June to 3 July 1979.

Our knowledge of Black Africa is nothing like as good as that of Latin America or South-East Asia. Film, art and literature experts have long known that a very individual and independent culture has been developing on this continent for decades.

But our image of Africa is still determined by Western, white thinking, which cannot do justice to black cultures as long as it ignores new information.

So the efforts and plans of Horizons 1979 must be highly praised, even though there are still many unanswered questions. There will be no problem about accommodating the 800 guests from Africa for three weeks. But how will communication, discussion and comparison take place? Will the communication centre in the Budapester Strasse be enough for these requirements? Will it be possible, at such a huge event, to have enough simultaneous translations? Jochen R. Klicker, director of the festival, knows Africa very well. And cooperation with the Friends of the German Cinemathek which, together with the International Young Film Forum, has long been interested in film in the Third World countries, will no doubt give the whole event additional strength.

Heiko R. Blum

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 20 June 1979)





This example of contemporary African art comes from Musani, a Tanzanian village near Dar es Salaam. Plants, and animals, medicine men, dancers and erotic themes are the motifs usually painted in bright colours on squares of wood. (Photo: Lilapress)

STAGE

Löscher's experimental theatre out of place in Düsseldorf



A very rich and upright man has a theatre group of somewhat dubious morals. The actors, not at all grateful to their benefactor, mock the rich old man in their plays.

Thus both sides can be satisfied with themselves: the rich man because he has proved his tolerance, the actors because they have proved their obstinacy.

A story from the age of absolutism? Moliere at the court of the Sun King? Not at all — an affair in the Federal Republic of Germany, from a plutocratic rather than an aristocratic location: a tale from Düsseldorf.

Düsseldorf has one of the most expensive, one of the biggest (and most frightful) modern theatres in the country. For years no-one knew what to do with all the cash. They produced nothing more than an austerely representative city theatre.

Then the director of the theatre (or whoever it was) had a good idea: they appointed a director (Peter Löscher) and took on a number of actors who, mainly in Frankfurt, had performed successful and intelligent theatre but wanted to get away from the restrictions of repertory theatre.

Löscher and his company were offered the chance of working as their own theatre within a theatre. A small, independent group on the fringe (but under the aegis) of a big, dependent city theatre.

To be able to work freely like any free group but without the economic worries which threaten freedom — this seemed an almost ideal compromise between subsidised theatre and off-off theatre. And the compromise worked.

The Löscher group brought some of the dark appeal of anarchy, the black magic of the underground, to the nouveau riche Düsseldorf theatrical scene.

A director has his own free theatre group. The actors, far from grateful, mock him in their plays. In Schiller's Robbers, Löscher's first production this season, a friar appeared and warned the robbers urgently to return to bourgeois life.

In the Düsseldorf version, he looked the spitting image of Düsseldorf theatre director Günther Beelitz.

In his Face Covered with Tears, a video and theatre play and the group's second production, Günther Beelitz appears again, this time, played by Löscher's six-year-old son.

The curly-haired boy, stressing his words strangely and comically, carries a severe letter from boss Beelitz to his disobedient actors.

Beelitz, it will be recalled, stopped the publication of a programme to the Robbers in which the actors wanted to express their own, very private and very provocative views about Schiller and the Federal Republic of Germany.

While Löscher's son recited the Beelitz letter, Beelitz himself sat in the audience, the image of tolerance from on high.

An amusing joke for insiders, but also a hollow one: Peter Löscher's group has overstepped the limits separating necessary self-interrogation within the theatre from futile self-reflection.

One of the excellences of Löscher's theatrical work was always that he distrusted the theatre, always tested his methods and analysed their effects.

Even when he was directing dubious works such as Strindberg's Playing with Fire, Rudkin's Before Night or Bruckner's Sickness of Youth, he always managed to turn them into a scenic essay on dubious theatre.

But even in the Düsseldorf version of The Robbers, much praised and invited to the Berlin Theatre Festival (the invitation was proudly turned down), the critical attitude to his own metier had become a critically coquettish attitude.

On a very fashionably arranged stage (with billiard table, bed and mirror walls) the group presented an anthology of advanced theatrical devices, an effect-seeking demonstration of new, relaxed acting attitudes rather than anything else.

They did not use the obvious, chic idea of making Schiller's desperadoes the blood brothers of the German terrorists but they had the equally chic ersatz idea of making Schiller's story tell their own.

It was that of actors who had got out of but had not really escaped from bourgeois theatre. The actor as a desperado in love with his own despair.

The new project, His Face Covered with Tears, is, like The Robbers, presented in a fair hall, i.e. spatially demonstratively outside the main Düsseldorf theatre.

Here the motif of self-interrogation and self-reflection is varied to the extreme: to exhaustion. Peter Löscher and his dramaturgist and author Horst Laube have both written a very powerful sounding ideological foreword:

"Making theatre like one writes an essay: authors are the actors. Their work leaves behind the traces of their imagination and their biography."

They both announce that "every person has something that no-one can take away from him, his own individual history: a possibility of creative resistance."

But this aggressive announcement is followed by a strangely clapped-out, almost paralysed play, far less an act of creative resistance than of uncreative whimpering. Not an essay but an elegy.

The actor a desperado overcome by his own exhaustion. An empty, rectangular room. On the huge stage only a wooden box and over the stage a circle of sixteen TV sets. Actor Edgar M. Böhlke says a few sentences by Wittgenstein over the video system. Then we see Horst Laube on his terrace having breakfast, very relaxed. Laube tells us the story of his brother-in-law Paul, who was a detective and one day decided to flee from Germany and become a private eye in the United States.

It is only a moderately exciting story and so one has the leisure to speculate whether it is a true story or fiction, possibly an extract from Laube's next work.

Then the actors come slowly onto the stage, all very relaxed, form groups and look at Laube, who is still talking, on the TV screens.

Some time later actor Dieter Wernecke walks over the stage, now picturesquely decorated with upended stools, picks letters up off the ground and sadly reads them.

They are love letters from a persistent admirer, a married woman. Yet again we ask ourselves: is this really Wernecke's own story or fiction? Or is it perhaps a variation on Goethe's Stella: the man pursued by women.

Those in the know realise of course that years ago Wernecke played Fernando, who is pursued by two women, in a production by Luc Bondy in Darmstadt.

The evening drags sadly along with this and similar solo numbers. Things happen on the sixteen TV screens: on one occasion we see a storm, later only the noses, mouths and ears of the Düsseldorf actors.

A few things also happen on the stage: people suddenly start talking, very relaxedly of course, about the weather, complaining about rainy Germany. It is as if the group is presenting the endgame of a theatre group.

Finally everyone resorts to individual performances: Dieter Wernecke shows the audience pictures of his best roles, Kees Campfens reads from his Dutch passport, Edgar M. Böhlke shows the audience his body, very carefully and no longer quite as relaxed: the entire man, from head to prick.

The group, which was not a group at all this evening, disaggregates into solo-entertainers, solo vanities. The desperado is a narcissus, unsuited to being in a group; this seems to be the final, thoroughly abysmal message of the evening.

Of course this is all somehow intended critically and self-critically. Perhaps it is even a parable on states of exhaustion in our country, our theatre. Perhaps this self-indulgent study is an attack on the artist's self-indulgence.

Any critical objection to the project has already been more or less formulated, vaguely hinted at in the project itself.

But what is the use of tiredly and tediously presenting on the stage how tired and tedious things are? Perpetually demonstrating how off-hand one is (this is not city's theatre!), perpetually showing how perfectly one has mastered the technology (all the inane video jargon), in love with being different yet exhausted by being different?

I cannot understand why Peter Löscher of all people, a clever and serious director, is pushing the avant-garde in this trendy, chic direction.

His actors vaguely remind me of the intellectual playboys of Düsseldorf and Hamburg, always relaxed, always self-critical, obsessed with modern thought and modern devices, though in their aesthetics motor bikes and sports cars play the part of the video cameras.

Peter Löscher's theatre is out of place in Düsseldorf. But if he does not find another subject than himself (and the fact that this self is out of place in Düsseldorf) then I fear it will one day be all too at home in Düsseldorf.

Benjamin Henrichs

(Die Zeit, 22 June 1979)

Edgar M. Böhlke reciting Wittgenstein over video

(Photo: Lore Bermbach)

■ MEDICINE

Radioactive iodine invaluable in heart diagnosis, lower risk than X-ray

Every year hundreds of thousands of people in this country have heart attacks. For many they are often the second and third.

These people are in particular danger and every diagnostic advance which can improve the accuracy of predictions is highly important.

Scientists at Jülich nuclear research plant have developed a new method of cardiac diagnosis. We have them to thank for the fact that we now know more about cardiac processes.

Since the introduction of ECGs it has been assumed that the way in which the heart functions is almost exclusively mechanical. This would mean that a heart failure would also be seen as a mechanical disorder.

Not enough attention has been paid to the fact that all bodily functions are biochemically controlled, including the function of the heart muscle.

Our permanent pump, the heart, gets through an almost incredible amount of work in a year. Assuming 70 beats a minute as an average we come to an annual total of 36 million beats.

In other words the heart muscles must contract and relax 36 million times. For this gigantic operation the heart needs a lot of energy and an adequate supply of oxygen.

The heart meets its energy requirements by the biological transformation of glucose, lactic acid and free fatty acids.

Jülich scientists, led by Professors Feinendegen (medicine) and Stöcklin (nuclear chemistry), have found that when heart attacks occur the free fatty acids needed for the heart's energy supply are far more inadequately stored.

This storage defect of the heart muscle then leads to underfunctioning of the heart muscle due to lack of energy.

Of the many fatty acids under consideration, one proved especially favourable: heptadecan acid. This acid was marked with a radioactive isotope so that it could be pinpointed in the body.

This not only made it possible to locate it at any time but it was also possible to observe precisely in what combinations this fatty acid is gradually reduced in the body.

In half of all tests with radioactively marked connections, radiopharmaca, iodine was chosen as the marking substance, though here with a small but important difference from the traditional method.

Whereas isotope 131 is mainly used nowadays the Jülich scientists used iodine 123. There were two important reasons for this: firstly, the physical radioactive life of iodine 123 is about ten times shorter than that of iodine 131.

The advantage of this is that the body is exposed to radioactivity for a much shorter period and thus the probability of damage to health is considerably less.

The second reason is the physiological effect. Whereas iodine 131, after it has been separated from the fatty acid in the body, is stored in the thyroid gland, this effect is not observed with iodine 123.

Precisely this storage contributes to a large extent to radioactivity within the body. With iodine 123 radioactive exposure of the body is 22 times less, less even than that of an ordinary X-ray.

How are such tests carried out? The patient is given an injection with marked iodine fatty acid. About ten to fifteen minutes later the distribution of the active iodine in the heart muscle and in a control region also in the thorax is measured with a modern gamma large-field camera.

The camera shots take several minutes. During the this time the heart continues to beat normally. The result is that the pictures are blurred. Such pictures are known as scientigrams.

However, the Jülich scientists have even come up with an answer to this problem: they concluded that the pictures would be clear if they could manage to take them always at the same stage of the movement phase.

As an ECG device can keep a check on such phases, it was merely a technical problem to couple the two devices with one another. The photographs taken by means of this trick are clearer than any hitherto, which improves the pinpointing of the infarct.

As iodine 123 is separated biochemically from the fatty acid in the body, a correction of the given activity levels has to be made.

After the first measurement, an injection of anorganic iodine 123 (natrium iodide) is given and the activity of the free iodine determined. Only after this correction has been done is it possible to say how much iodised fatty acid is really stored in the heart muscle.

Jülich scientists have used another isotope to follow further biochemical reduction reactions in the body. This substance is carbon-11.

It was shown that as a result of the effect of enzymes two carbon atoms gradually separated off from the fatty acid.

In a complex process carbon dioxide is formed, a great gain in energy for the heart muscle. After a long series of reactions this carbon dioxide is exhaled.

Tests with this isotope are even more difficult to carry out than those with iodine 123, because the radioactive life of carbon-11 is only 20 minutes.

The isotope iodine 123 can also be used in other nuclear medical tests. The thyroid gland function test is a prime example.

The Nuclear Medicine Clinic and Polyclinic in Munich has been using this less dangerous substance for kidney diagnosis for years. In the kidney function test iodine marked with hippuric acid is used.

Here too the isotope quickly enriches, provides clear pictures and after thirty minutes has left the organ.

The transport of radiopharmaca containing such short-lived isotopes is a major problem. At the moment there is only one plant in the Federal Republic of Germany in which large amounts of iodine 123 can be produced: the isochroncyclotron at Karlsruhe nuclear research centre.

Here a batch of the substance for use in South German hospitals is produced once a week.

Given the unfavourable geographic position and the size of the plant, only hospitals in South Germany can be supplied at the moment. Scientists estimate, however, that production could be doubled without affecting the centre's research programme.

Diagnosis of heart infarcts with iodine 123 has brought a number of new findings and insights. The most important advantage of this method is the reduced radiation risk for the organ being examined and for the whole body.

As the complex connections between radiation, chemicals in the environment and resultant changes in human genetic material have not yet been satisfactorily researched, any move which reduces one of these factors is to be welcomed.

It remains to be seen whether the new heart infarct diagnosis of the Jülich research group could also be used as a means of predicting heart attacks and a routine means of checking endangered persons.

One thing we can definitely say today: despite the technical problems caused by physical qualities, iodine 123 will in future play a dominant role in nuclear medical diagnosis.

Wolf G. Dorner
(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 16 June 1979)

Vitality has little to do with age, says Bonn psychologist

Joy in life and vitality by no means depend on age, nor on whether an elderly person lives alone, where he spends the evening of his life or what his or her material circumstances are.

Not even objectively observable damage to health or mobility are decisive for "happiness," i. e. psychophysical well-being in old age.

The essential factor is how the person regards his own health subjectively. This result of a recent examination of 490 old people, mainly women, was given at a symposium entitled Vitality from the Test-Tube or from Nature?

The survey was conducted by Professor Ursula Lehr, head of the psychology department at Bonn University. The symposium was held on a ship on Lake Starnberg.

Only in about half the cases examined did the subjective sense of health correspond to the objective state of health as analysed by the doctors.

About 25 per cent of those over sixty thought their health was better than it in fact was (men more frequently than women). Another quarter considered their health poorer than it really was.

A more negative subjective view of health, the researchers found, often comes in conjunction with less activity, less drive, fewer leisure interests and stronger feelings of boredom and loneliness.

This is particularly so when the person feels that nothing can be done about his health. This can even lead to depressive behaviour.

Frau Lehr therefore recommends that "the subjective feeling that improvement can be made" should be conveyed in the social and medical care of older people.

Lack of vitality, the reduction of intellectual, emotional and social capacities were not, she said, inevitable concomitants of old age. These things could not only be delayed or even prevented but sometimes even reversed.

Frau Lehr said the precondition for this was that necessary measures were not left until the person was already old. They should begin early. Social and intellectual capacities had to be trained throughout life.

Dr Werner Jansen of Nuremberg Geriatric Hospital said regenerative measures should start as early as thirty. Over 25 per cent of the over-25s suffered from contraction of the blood vessels. This was attributable to the kind of society in which we lived today.

Jansen spoke of the age-old dream of finding an elixir to ward off old age. Munich occupational physiologist Professor Wolf Müller-Limmroth recommended a cocktail of beer yeast, bees' honey, lemon and orange juice.

Stuttgart nutrition expert H. J. Holzmeier recommended more magnesium instead of calcium in our food as a means of regeneration. Dr Ulrich Kübler, a nature healing specialist from Munich, praised the effects of healing herbs.

A double blind study at the Salzburg Institute of Psychological Geriatric Research has proved that ginseng can make up for loss of psychic capacities in great old age.

Kübler also reported that some researchers in the USA and this country were conducting dangerous experiments on themselves in efforts to slow down the aging process and increase life expectancy by twenty to thirty per cent.

Karl Stankiewitz
(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 19 June 1979)

■ EDUCATION

Linguistics is increasingly popular at university

Few subjects have developed as rapidly at German and foreign universities in the past twenty years as linguistics.

Of course there has always been a study of language in general within the sphere of German, French or English philology. But it was primarily historical and comparative.

Different languages were studied to see if a common origin could be found.

Or the development of certain linguistic phenomena within one language was analysed, for example the transformation from Old High German to Middle High German to Modern Standard German.

Modern linguists are interested in something different: they want to study the phenomenon of language for its own sake. Living languages are studied at different levels as basic facts of human society.

This structuralist approach to linguistics dominates at German universities, at which linguistics is subdivided into phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.

Language is primarily a social phenomenon, it does not occur in a vacuum. There is a certain intention behind every speech act.

Because language is embedded in a social context, there are inevitably many points of contact between linguistics and other sciences.

For the student this means that he can combine his study of linguistics with the study of other languages. Those who want to study the relation between language and social status, i.e. social linguistic stratification, can specialise in the field of sociolinguistics.

There are also close connections between linguistics and psychology and philosophy, if one concentrates on the individual acquisition of language or the relationship between speaking, thinking and language.

Almost all German and foreign universities have linguistics courses. Classes and seminars in historical and systematic linguistics are an essential part of any study of languages.

No teacher of modern languages can avoid grappling with at least one aspect of linguistics.

Linguistics has now freed itself from its close connection with individual languages. The University of Bielefeld, for example, has a special faculty of linguistics and literature.

Students taking the four-year linguistics course not only have to attend classes in syntax and communication theory but also seminars on theoretical problems in linguistics and the logic of language.

They also have to attend basic courses in linguistic data processing. The lecture programme shows that the would-be linguist has to study data processing and computer languages.

The computer does valuable work for the linguist. Often it is the only possible means of organising and systematising large amounts of complex linguistic material.

Apart from this special knowledge the linguistics student should be able to speak several languages, ideally at least one non-Indo-Germanic language.

The professional prospects for linguists are not exactly good, apart from the possibilities of language teaching.

Compared to the numbers studying modern languages the numbers of those taking linguistics with another subsidiary subject are relatively small, which is why there are hardly any restrictions on the basis of Abitur marks.

Nonetheless, even the small number of linguistics graduates find it difficult to find appropriate jobs outside the field of research.

So many move into areas involving the production and treatment of linguistic texts in the widest sense — newspapers, publishing, radio, television or automatic text-production.

Some specialist linguists work in the medical and psychological fields, helping the deaf and other children with language disorders.

Those who have a definite career aim in mind would thus be best advised to study a modern language and linguistics as a subsidiary.

Those who despite the bleak job prospects want to take linguistics as a major ought to consider first what their main interests in this field are and how this knowledge could later be applied.

Ewald Mengel
(Die Welt, 20 June 1979)

Comprehensive agreement

Without swerving from their opposing views on comprehensive schools, Bonn and the Länder agreed that in future leaving certificates from comprehensive schools would be recognised in all Länder.

Ministers of Education will set out the framework for recognition as soon as possible. The main task is to find criteria for the material taught and the requirements of the final examination.

The SPD/FDP-governed Länder believe the comprehensive school could now be introduced nationwide, whereas the CDU/CSU-ruled Länder want to retain the tripartite school system and continue with comprehensive experiments.

The Bonn government and Länder commission on educational planning also agreed on the draft programme for the continuation of the overall educational plan, due to be passed in December.

This programme envisages a coordinated development of the educational system until 1990. Young people born in the baby boom years will thus be guaranteed an adequate range of educational possibilities.

By 1985 all young people will have the opportunity to stay on at school full-time for a tenth year.

From 1980 onwards there should be kindergarten places for more than eight out of ten children between three and six. And primary schools that do not meet the numerical requirements because of the drop in the birth rate will not be closed.

Werner Bollmann
(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 19 June 1979)

■ MODERN LIVING

Hohenzollern prince sues for libel

Judge Kiesel heads a Stuttgart court responsible for first hearings of Press cases. A year ago he hit the headlines by ruling that Hans Filbinger, who was later to resign as Premier of Baden-Württemberg, could with impunity be called a "dreadful lawyer."

In context this clearly meant the Christian Democrat politician was a fear-inspiring lawyer, not just a poor one. He had been proved to have continued sentencing German soldiers according to Nazi laws after World War II had ended in Norway.

This time Judge Kiesel is about to pass judgment in a case that may, in comparison, seem small fry, but you never can tell. The defendant is *7 Tage*, a women's weekly magazine with a telling crown on its masthead and a circulation of more than half a million.

Anne Heumeier, 36, is the magazine's staff writer in the dock for writing sentences such as this: "Pale and shaking, the inordinately slender man sits in a worn-out armchair and looks out into the park."

How did she know the armchair was worn out, the judge asked. Frau Heumeier was at a loss for an answer. This was the opening sentence of a story she had written about Prince Emanuel von Hohenzollern.

It was published in *7 Tage* last November headlined His Congenital Disease Overshadows Family's Happiness. The prince is suing the magazine for libel.

In the story, commissioned by her editor, she wrote: "Prince Emanuel is said to suffer from epileptic fits. He has long been unable to keep up his business career. He will never again be able to drive a car.

"He now lives on a modest unemployment benefit in Villa Eugénie, a dilapidated old mansion in Hechingen's Schlosspark."

Prince Emanuel has submitted to the court two medical certificates according to which he is in the best of health. He tells court reporters he is still working and still holds a driving licence.

As for his son Alexander, who according to the magazine article already shows signs of the dread disease and can no longer go to a normal school, the prince says his son, aged eight, has now gone on to a Waldorf school after two years at a normal primary school.

Prince Emanuel claims not a word of the story is true and is suing the magazine for DM35,000 in damages. Judge Kiesel suggested DM8,000 might be a suitable sum, but the publishers will hear nothing of it.

Congenital Disease Overshadows Family's Happiness was a carefully researched article, *7 Tage* claims, and the plaintiff is not entitled to a pfennig in damages.

Yet Frau Heumeier, who on her own admission has never been inside the "dipalidated mansion," has this to say about it: "The damp old walls virtually defy attempts to heat the family home the plaster is falling from them in huge lumps."

Asked by Judge Kiesel how she knew about this detail, Frau Heumeier concedes that it was no more than an assumption, but she is reliably informed that the owners have been trying to induce the prince to move out so they could renovate and redecorate the building, so she just put two and two together.

7 Tage is an oldtimer among women's magazines, having been published virtually without interruption since 1843. It decided to write a story about Prince Emanuel of Hohenzollern in the wake of articles in daily newspapers.

Defence lawyer Wenzel claims these prior reports prove the article substantiated inasmuch as the prince has never once made use of his legal right to have the newspaper print a refutation of their stories.

If the prince has not objected in the past, rewrite men (and women) cannot reasonably be expected to start from scratch. Besides, Frau Heumeier has tried hard to make sure she was writing a true story.

She claims to have gleaned her information from two fellow-journalists but admits she has never even spoken to the prince.

Maybe, her lawyer concedes, she had been slightly wide of the mark in a few details. But the court should bear in mind that a magazine like *7 Tage* had a readership that wanted to read stories that tore at the heartstrings.

Defence lawyer Wenzel is a member of the Löffler partnership, the best-known specialists in Press law in the country.

At the second hearing on 21 June Judge Kiesel twice suggested to the defendant that DM8,000 in damages might be a sum acceptable in an out-of-court settlement, but the publishers would hear none of it.

So he will soon have to pass judgment in an action brought by a Hohenzollern prince on a magazine that specialises in high society gossip about ice skaters Marika Kilius and Hans-Jürgen Bäumler, Viennese popular singer and entertainer Peter Alexander and Princess Caroline of Monaco.

Prince Emanuel says his congenital disease is nothing more than the aftermath of a skiing accident followed by a car crash. The Stuttgart case is a libel action; he will later be suing the magazine for damages to his business reputation.

Peter Henkel

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 22 June 1979)

Charioteers of the Gods meet at Munich Sheraton

Six hundred believers in prehistoric astronauts from all over the world recently met for a three-day convention at the Sheraton Hotel in Munich.

It was the sixth international conference of the Ancient Astronaut Society, but the first time the congress had ever been held in West Germany.

As a low-pitched gong sounded over the hotel loudspeakers in mid-session, onlookers might have been excused for thinking, for one moment, that a little green man from Mars was about to mount the rostrum.

But the loudspeaker announcement was disappointingly mundane. "Would Herr So-and-So please come to the reception to take a telephone call?"

The doyen of ancient astronaut disciples is Erich von Däniken, Swiss author of Chariots of the Gods and a succession of books on astral archaeology over the past eleven years.

Däniken's theory, that visitors from outer space landed on Earth in prehistoric times, is certainly backed up by some intriguing facts, although views may differ on how they may fairly be interpreted.

At any rate, in 1973 the AAS was set up to collect, compare notes and publish evidence in support of Däniken's theories, as Gene M. Phillips, the society's American president, puts it.

Däniken claims not only that visitors from outer space landed on Earth in prehistoric times but also that the present technological civilisation on Earth is not its first.

Evidence of a kind was certainly submitted by delegates to the Munich conference. There was a model of a reactor-powered man-made machine the astral gods are said to have bequeathed to the Israelites and the statue of a Mayan astronaut god found in Guatemala in 1968.

The statue's helmet was sensational and unique in Maya literature, Däniken said. It was airtight and linked to a small device on the statue's back by a tube.

In front of the helmet (and the statue's nose) was a device that defied clear definition but resembled the filter of a gas mask, he added.

Sceptics were not viewed kindly at the gathering. Dr Duncan Lunan from Scotland told delegates "we are either one of the first space travelling civilisations in our galaxy or are regarded as a protected species by others."

If the latter was the case, he said, the Earth must definitely have been visited by extra-terrestrial beings. He suggested a further systematic search for secret hideouts.

Appeals of this kind have already had results. Däniken's secretary Willi Dünnenberger and friend Walter J. Langbein, an Erlangen theology student, submitted a survey of footprints of the gods.

They were gigantic "footprints" allegedly testifying to visits by king-sized extra-terrestrial beings to Texas and Australia.

Rosemarie Bomgässer

(Die Welt, 18 June 1979)

King-sized catfish

Bad Zwischenahn has a lake famous for its fish. It used to be an angler's paradise. But an enormous catfish, the Nessie of Bad Zwischenahn, has devoured them all.

It is reportedly three-and-a-half metres (11ft 6in) long and must weigh two to three hundredweight.

A few years ago tench and carp were netted by the hundredweight, but now catches are down to zero and even the birds that used to frequent the lake have taken their leave.

The local anglers' club invested DM8,000 in small fry to restock the lake, but the situation did not improve. Herr Kühl of the anglers' club suspected he and his colleagues might be to blame.

Five years ago the lake was full to overflowing with whitefish, so much so that other species were endangered. So the club had let loose 75 young catfish to redress the balance.

The catfish is a scavenger who makes short shrift of whitefish, but the young catfish can hardly have wrought such havoc. Even ducks have been eaten by the submarine marauder.

The riddle was solved by coincidence in the shape of PC Grünke of the waterways division, who was out on patrol. He was just checking his radio equipment when he saw the gigantic fish alongside his boat.

"It gave me quite a start," he says. Fortunately another officer was on board. "The fish was longer than our boat, but I wouldn't have dared to report the incident if I had been on my own. No-one would have believed me."

The king-sized catfish has since been sighted from the shore as it ploughed through the waves. It has been nicknamed Moby Dick but has so far evaded capture.

"A catfish that size eats about half its own weight in fish daily. How many more of them are there out there, I wonder?" groans Herr Kühl.

rtr

(Lübecker Nachrichten, 19 June 1979)

Karlsruhe man shoots 'ghost,' fined for firearms offence

Seven nocturnal visits by a voyeur made life misery for a 45-year-old Karlsruhe chemist and his family. On one occasion his wife, a doctor, woke up in the middle of the night feeling someone had touched her shoulder. On another the husband woke up having heard noises in the living room.

A burglar alarm fitted to the garden gate brought no relief. Neither did blanks fired from a starting pistol. The unknown nocturnal visitor kept coming and regularly succeeded in making his getaway.

The police were unable to make much in the way of a recommendation. The only advice they had to offer was that maybe the man should apply for a firearms licence.

But the Karlsruhe chemist was not prepared to wait until the paperwork was through. He had an old pistol of his wife's serviced.

One night he woke up to see the apparition at the foot of his bed. He gave a shout, toted his gun and jumped out after the unwelcome visitor.

He told the voyeur to stop and warned him he was going to shoot, but to no avail, so he fired twice and hit the miscreant in the hip as he made his getaway.

There have been no more nocturnal visits but instead the Karlsruhe chemist is in trouble with the law. He was found guilty of an offence against the Firearms Act and fined DM4,800.

He appealed to the Supreme Court, which reversed the lower court's ruling. It may or may not have been an emergency (in which self-defence was justified), but the marksman was certainly not the guilty party.

The unknown visitor had terrorised the family with his impudence and persistence. They could have been completely immobilised if the husband had not succeeded in stopping the visitor.

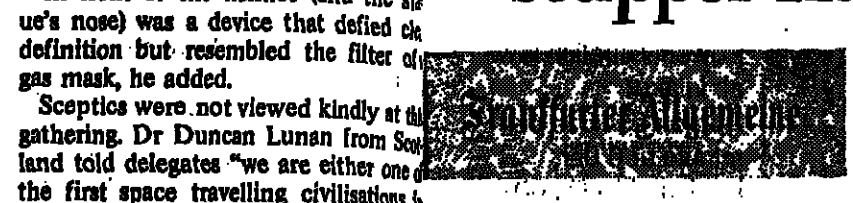
No other move could possibly have achieved the desired result, so the use of a firearm had been justified, the court ruled.

Hans Holfeld

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 20 June 1979)

■ SPORT

Safety regulations threaten to scupper Hamburg sailing ship



The Sea Cloud, a four-mast barque with a big funnel amidships, must surely be one of the most beautiful sailing ships still in use. Yet it has become something of a cause célèbre.

The Hamburg shipping authority responsible for safety on board has banned it from setting sail. Its owners, a group of Hamburg businessmen and yachtsmen, have applied for a court order lifting the ban.

The point at issue is important for many owners of sailing ships and holidaymakers. When can a vessel under sail that takes paying guests, as it were, be classified as a private or club yacht?

If it is not a private yacht it then must be a passenger vessel to which international safety regulations apply. But let us start at the beginning.

The Sea Cloud was launched at the Kiel Germania yard on 25 April 1931 as the Hussar. It was commissioned by US millionaire Edward F. Hutton for his wife.

Her second husband was Joseph E. Davies, the US ambassador in Moscow, who gave the four-master its present name. Its next owner was Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo.

The Sea Cloud, incidentally, has a much larger area under sail than the Gorch Fock, the naval training ship, which has 1,954 square metres to the Sea Cloud's 3,300.

An American charter company later did business with the barque, but it has lately been mothballed for some time, spending the past eight years in berth at Panama, slowly rusting away.

Hamburg yachtsmen, including a number of businessmen, discovered the ship in Central America. For years they had been looking for a well-preserved sailing ship to rival the Passat, moored in Travemünde, near Lübeck.

The Sea Cloud was described by one of its owners, in a letter to the Kiel shipyard that built it, as "the most successful and best completed and fitted yacht."

Its new owners, keen to provide Hamburg with a prestige sailing ship of its kind, bought it for DM3m. They were a Windjammer Sailing Club set up by a group of Hamburg businessmen.

They invested a further DM5m in repairs and conversion, but not to make the Sea Cloud a museum ship of the kind Hamburg has long felt the need for.

The idea was to take paying passengers (who must first join the club) on jaunts. The Sea Cloud berthed in Hamburg last spring. Since the safety authorities were also based in Hamburg they did not have to go far to take a look at the Sea Cloud, and what they saw led to official restrictions. They ruled that the Sea Cloud, with its wood-panelled cabins, did not comply with fire regulations. Said Rainer Alpers, head of the Seeberufsgenossenschaft's safety department: "Since there is no mention of it being a private yacht in the brochures available at travel agents, we must assume it is intended to sail as a passenger vessel."



Sea Cloud in full sail
(Photo: Deutsche Zeitung)

The Sea Cloud does, indeed, sleep eighty passengers and a crew of fifty. One of its owners, economist Cornelius Liedcke, says it is not under sail for commercial purposes but merely the property of a private club.

Club membership costs a signing-on fee of DM100 or so. Passengers who do not take turns as crew members must then pay between DM1,400 and DM2,500 each per week aboard.

Crew members who scale the masts and set the sails and are prepared to work and not just savour the atmosphere of sailing to various destinations in various categories of comfort will pay less.

The safety authorities are concerned purely with safety on board, and they feel precautions on board the luxury yacht leave much to be desired.

"The Sea Cloud is intended to carry more than twelve paying passengers, so it qualifies as a passenger vessel by the terms of international regulations," says Herr Alpers.

Just trying to get round Imco's Solas regulations claim

Its owners were merely trying to get round the regulations by registering as a private club, he said. He was well aware that the ruling would have far-reaching repercussions.

"There are a fair number of sailing ships that take on passengers in much the same way as the Sea Cloud; you need only to browse through the brochures of cruises on offer in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and the Baltic."

The Sea Cloud's owners already run the Ariadne, another windjammer, and do so at a reasonable profit, it is understood. As soon as the Ariadne docks at a German port, safety officers will be taking a look at it.

The authorities refer to the international Solas regulations, short for Safety of Life at Sea, endorsed by about 110 seafaring member-nations of Imco, the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organisation.

The Safety of Life at Sea regulations were first passed in 1949 and have since been revised and updated in accordance with latest developments in technology and accident research.

If the Sea Cloud's owners fit it out with sprinklers and prove it has watertight doors and bulkheads it will comply with the original 1949 regulations and that, as far as the Hamburg safety officers are concerned, will be enough for the time being.

But the case is now sub judice. The owners lost their first action. A Hamburg administrative court refused to waive the sailing ban, indicating that it felt the safety authorities might well have a case.

Assuming this ruling is upheld despite the appeal and the Sea Cloud is found to be a commercial venture and not a private yacht, the owners will still have one option by which to skirt the rules and regulations.

It is not an option that finds favour with yachting circles in Germany, but the owners may feel they have no choice but to register the Sea Cloud under a flag of convenience.

It could be registered in, say, Guatemala, which is not a member of Imco. This is a loophole they may still use if they so choose, Herr Alpers sadly admits.

But the passengers would be the losers, he claims. Registration under a flag of convenience would be at their expense in terms of safety forfeited.

Yet its owners must surely realise that they would be doing themselves and their passengers a better turn by fitting out the Sea Cloud with sprinklers at a cost of a few hundred thousand marks.

At present the Sea Cloud is moored at a berth in Kiel, where visitors to the Kiel Regatta can see it for themselves.

Thomas Vinsor Wolgast

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 23 June 1979)